# SOME PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS

TAKÉ JONESCU

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# *Some Personal Impressions*

# SOME PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS

BY

TAKE JONESCU

FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF ROUMANIA

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

VISCOUNT BRYCE, O.M.

NEW YORK

FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

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# INTRODUCTION

BY VISCOUNT BRYCE

This book should need no introduction, for all who have tried to follow the course of events in the Danubian States and Balkan States during the last few years cannot but know the name and fame of Mr. Take Jonescu, one of the most active and gifted, as well as one of the most highly cultivated statesmen in Eastern Europe. However, at the request of its author, whose acquaintance I had the good fortune to make when traveling in Roumania fourteen years ago, I willingly write a few sentences of Preface to this English translation. The French original (for Mr. Jonescu writes French with singular facility, clearness, and grace) has already found many readers, and this version deserves to win for it a still larger circle here and in America.

Those of us who in France and the English-speaking countries have grown familiar with the names of the more prominent actors in the

great and gloomy drama of the last ten or twelve years, must have often wished to know something of the personalities that lay behind the names. What were their talents, their characters, their manners? What were the ideas and motives which prompted either their avowed purposes or their secret aims? In some cases these motives may long remain obscure, but in others the recorded words and acts are sufficient to enable those who were in close touch with them to form a just estimate and present to us true portraits, provided always that such observers bring discernment and impartiality to the task. The book is modestly entitled "Some Personal Impressions"; and the descriptions it contains are for the most part vigorous sketches rather than portraits. Some, however, may be called vignettes, more or less finished drawings, each consisting of few lines, but those lines sharply and firmly drawn. Intermingled with this score of personal sketches there are also a few brief essays or articles which set before us particular scenes, little fragments of history in which the author bore a part, all relating to the persons who either figured in the war, or were concerned with the intrigues from which it sprang. Among these we find several Ger-

man statesmen—Kiderlin-Waechter, Prince Bülow, and Prince Lichnowsky, a large number of Austrians, among whom Counts Berchtold, Achrenthal, Goluchowsky, Czernin and Mensdorff, are the best known; the late King Charles of Roumania, the German Emperor, Eleutherios Venizelos, and lastly the most ruthless and unscrupulous ruffian (with the possible exception of Trotsky) whom the war has brought to light, the Turkish Talaat Pasha.

These, with some minor personages, make an interesting gallery, for though most of them are dealt with very briefly—sometimes merely by telling an anecdote or reporting a single conversation—still in every case a distinct impression is conveyed. We feel that the man described is no longer a name but a creature of flesh and blood, with something by which we can recognize him and remember him for future use. National characteristics are lightly but brightly touched. Among the Germans, Kiderlin-Waechter stands out as in Mr. Jonescu's judgment the ablest, and Bülow the cleverest. If the Austrian statesmen are, or were, what he paints them (and there seems no reason to doubt the general justice of his observations), the hideous failure of their di-

plomacy becomes comprehensible. A dynasty guided by such servants was fated to perish in the storm its folly had raised. Aehrenthal and Tisza were at least men of force and ability, but an ability which did not exclude bad principles and rash unwisdom. The rest were mostly ciphers; while of Count Berchtold, the description given by Mr. Jonescu successfully conveys to the reader that there was nothing to describe, at least on the intellectual side. One may pity the people which was guided by such statesmen, for they were not its choice, but one cannot pity the dynasty which did choose them. It well deserved to perish, after three centuries of pernicious power.

Besides the illuminative glimpses of curious scenes, and the vivacious sketches of notable personages, which these pages contain, the reader will find in them some contributions to history of permanent interest. We are helped to apprehend the views, and comprehend what is now called the "mentality" with which the ruling caste in Germany entered the war. It has been often said of late that the men in whose hands great decisions lay were not great enough for the fateful issues they had to decide. *Quantula sapientia regitur mundus* seems even

truer now than it did in the days of Oxenstierna. Among all the "Impressions" this book records, that is the one which stands out conspicuous.

*Monsieur Poincaré*

# I

## MONSIEUR POINCARÉ

On New Year's Eve, 1913, I arrived in Paris. I was on my way to London, where the Balkan Conference was then sitting. Negotiations between the Turks and the Balkan States had come to a deadlock, and I hoped to profit by this to the extent of coming to some pacific settlement of our territorial differences with Bulgaria. It was my intention to offer the support of Roumania to Bulgaria, which at that date meant the Balkan league, and if necessary to promise military assistance in order to force the Turk to give up Adrianople.

The Powers had no notion what to do. It was felt that there was little chance of mere collective notes having any success, and as for a naval demonstration, which alone could have saved the face of Kiamil's government, the Powers were too jealous and distrustful of each other to act together in this way. On the other hand it was certain that the armed

resistance of Turkey was shattered and that to force her hand would really be doing her a kindness. If only it had been done then, Turkey would have escaped Enver and her present misfortunes.

It is useless to repeat what I have so often said, that the idea of a war with Bulgaria, and possibly with all the Balkan States—our traditional friends—was utterly repugnant to me. It was even possible that such a war might bring about the expected European conflagration, in which we should find ourselves on the side of Austria-Hungary, a prospect that was altogether odious to me, for in it I saw the grave of our future and of our national ideal.

I hoped the Bulgars would appreciate the situation and would hasten to accept my suggestions. If only they had done so, peace with Turkey would have been signed in the first week of January, 1913, the second Balkan war would probably not have taken place, and the European war would have been averted for an indefinite number of years.

Although my hopes of arriving at an understanding with Bulgaria were high, I took the possibility of failure into consideration and

realized that I might want the friendly support of the Great Powers. This was why, before leaving Bucharest, I intimated to Monsieur Poincaré, then Prime Minister of France, that I was about to visit him.

II

M. Poincaré received me on the 1st of January, 1913, at half-past eight in the morning, an hour that in Paris is certainly an absurd time for an appointment; but I had to go to London in the afternoon, and on account of its being New Year's Day, Monsieur Poincaré was due at the Élysée at ten o'clock for the official ceremonies.

I asked Monsieur Poincaré for the support of France in our difficulties with Bulgaria. He made the warmest declarations of friendship for Roumania; promised me his own personal coöperation, but said, "My action is naturally limited by the fact that relations with our ally are most cordial while, owing to your military convention with Austria and Germany, you will be in the enemy's camp if war breaks out. You know well," and he could not have spoken with greater sincerity, "that *we* do not want war, and are doing

everything to avoid it. But if our adversaries force us to go to war the fact that your 300,000 rifles are on their side cannot be a matter of indifference to us."

As the Treaty between Roumania and the Triple Alliance was supposed to be kept secret I had to pretend that I knew nothing about the obligation he was alluding to.

The French Prime Minister, who knew the situation precisely, then asked me if I could assure him that in the event of war—a war that France would never provoke—he could hope that France and her allies would not find the Roumanian army against them.

Personally I had not believed for many years that the Roumanians and Magyars would ever fight side by side, but on the 1st of January, 1913, it was impossible for me to make any valid promise in Roumania's name.

I could only tell Monsieur Poincaré that I could not give him an answer, but that if I were in his place I should grant Roumania as much help as was compatible with my alliances and my obligations, and leave it to the future to prove whether I had acted wisely or not.

III

The events of 1913 confirmed my beliefs. With great clearness I saw that the idea of shedding Roumanian blood to glorify Magyarism was such an absurdity that no one on earth could give effect to it.

On the 9th of September, 1913, I paid Monsieur Poincaré another visit. He was then President of the Republic. He congratulated me on the success of Roumania, and I took occasion to say: "On New Year's Day you asked me a question which I could not then answer; I will give you your answer to-day. If war does break out—and I devoutly hope humanity may be spared such a calamity—you will not find the Roumanian army in your enemies' camp."

"Have you cancelled the treaty of alliance?" he asked.

"I know nothing about any treaty. All I know is that the Roumanian army will not be in your enemies' camp. I am quite certain about it, and if I did not know that we are both believers in peace and are doing all we can to preserve it, I should say that events will prove me right. Let us hope that they may never have occasion to do so."

"But are you sure to remain long in power?" he asked.

"Far from it, I shall be out of office in two months, but that doesn't matter. What I am telling you is true irrespective of what ministers comprise the government. After what has happened this summer no one will be able to make Roumanians fight against their will or against the dictates of national honor and interest."

*Prince Lichnowsky*

## II

### PRINCE LICHNOWSKY

TWENTY years ago Prince Lichnowsky was Secretary to the German Legation in Bucharest.

I knew him in those days as an intelligent young man, gay, witty and a real *grand seigneur*. Though a German diplomat he was Polish by origin and had all the adaptability, vivacity and brilliance of his race. We got on admirably.

I did not see him again until early in January, 1913, when I went to London to try and come to an understanding with Monsieur Danef over Bulgar-Roumanian difficulties.

Prince Lichnowsky had come back into the Diplomatic Service after a very long absence. He had only done so at the reiterated request of the Kaiser, who believed him to be the only man capable of succeeding Baron Marschall in London, Baron Marschall at that time having the reputation of being the ablest diplomat in the German service. I may as well say

here that in spite of his ability Marschall had not been much of a success in England. He had lived too long in Constantinople to make a good Ambassador at St. James's.

Prince Lichnowsky took his task seriously. He spared himself no trouble to win people's confidence, and in a short time had accomplished marvels in this direction. He was extremely frank, and his clear picturesque way of talking impressed people. It was he who, in speaking to me of the two little bits of Bulgar territory that jutted out into our Dobrudja, which Danef was at the time offering me as a complete satisfaction for our claims, contemptuously described them as "the two dugs of the bitch."

I will not now describe my interviews with Lichnowsky in 1913. I must admit, however, he was more than friendly and kind, and did me real services. He went so far even without waiting for the sanction of his Government as to make a proposal favorable to us at the Balkan Conference then sitting in London. I shall have something to say of all this another time.

I must, however, mention two points relating to that moment. One day Lichnowsky assured me that the relations between Eng-

land and Germany were excellent. The next day Sir E. Grey said to me, "If Prince Lichnowsky makes the proposal you speak of I shall receive it most favorably, as I do everything that comes from the German Ambassador. We are on excellent terms."

This was really remarkable when one thinks of the then recent Agadir crisis. I came to the conclusion that there was no danger of European war, and on the 7th of January, 1913, I wrote to King Charles that I was positive the great war would not break out yet awhile.

At that same time Lichnowsky said to me, "We will do what we can for you, but our means are limited. You should really apply to Vienna, as Austria can do a good deal at Sofia if she wishes to. I am sure there is something brewing between Austria and Bulgaria. I don't know exactly what it is, but something is going on."

In the spring of 1914 I was again in London for six days. Prince Lichnowsky gave a luncheon in my honor. All the Embassy staff were there, including the notorious Kühlman, then Councilor of the Embassy, now Minister at the Hague, who at that time was unfortunately corresponding with the Kaiser over

the head of Lichnowsky and was giving false information to Berlin as to the state of affairs in England.

I asked Lichnowsky how matters stood between England and Germany, and if he was as pleased with things as he had been in January, 1913. He replied that he had succeeded in his efforts, and that Germany and Great Britain were on the best of terms.

"I told the Kaiser," he said, "that nothing could be easier for us than to keep up good relations with England—because England genuinely cares for peace. But in order to do this we should never attack or annoy France, because in that case England would back her to the last man and the last shilling, and as it is not to our interest to irritate France, you see that our relations with England will remain of the best."

My impressions accorded with those of the German Ambassador. I felt that England would not tolerate an attack on France, but putting that aside it was certain that in London the desire was to be on good terms with Germany. In that one saw the guarantee of peace.

On July the 12th, 1914, I again arrived in London. I saw Lichnowsky and discussed the

Albanian question with him, which had by then become disquieting, and also the silence of Austria as to what line she was going to take over the Serajevo drama. Lichnowsky felt that Austria had something up her sleeve. His Austrian colleague Count Mensdorff was uncommunicative. Lichnowsky had been in Berlin since the Serajevo assassination, and he was not pleased with what he had seen in the Wilhelmstrasse. "They are giving Austria a free hand," he said, "without thinking where it may lead us. I warned them, but I am not happy about it, and am beginning to regret that I did not stay in Berlin." Lichnowsky did not conceal the fact that Tchirsky, the German Ambassador at Vienna, was encouraging the bellicose tendency of Austria.

Lichnowsky's apprehensions were well grounded. The German Chancellor, Bethman-Hollweg, had never been well up in questions of foreign politics—far from it. As for Von Jagow, I knew that at the time he was in Rome he had told one of his colleagues that in the Balkan incidents he saw the proof of the approaching disintegration of Austria-Hungary, and that it was a disturbing problem. With a fixed idea like that in his head it would be easy to make mistakes.

On Wednesday, July the 22d, I dined with Baroness Deichman, sister of Sir Maurice de Bunsen, British Ambassador in Vienna. The house was one of the social centers of London and lent itself most favorably to an Anglo-German understanding. I knew that I was to meet Lichnowsky, who had expressed a wish to talk to me that very day.

After dinner I went with Lichnowsky into a sitting-room in which there hung a fine portrait of Sir Maurice de Bunsen, painted, if I am not mistaken, by the great English artist, Herkomer.

Lichnowsky was in Court dress; he was to see the King that evening. I do not know what the occasion was. He told me he had not yet succeeded in finding out the text of the demands Austria was making of Serbia, but that he had learned enough to know that they would be very, very harsh. He knew that amongst other things Austria had asked for the suppression of a nationalist society in Serbia, and that alone seemed to him to be going pretty far. He earnestly begged me to suggest to the Roumanian Government that they should use any influence they had at Belgrade to get the Austrian note, *no matter what it was*, accepted by Serbia. "I promise

you," he said, "that in the carrying of it out, the Serbs can whittle it down or evade the conditions, and we can see to it that nothing is said. I take that on myself. We must get round this crisis somehow. For instance, the order to suppress a patriotic society need not really mean anything. In a few months they could resurrect it under another name."

I promised him to do what I could. That very night I telegraphed what the German Ambassador had communicated to me to Monsieur Bratiano, the then President of the Roumanian Council.

II

On Friday, July the 24th, the Austrian Ultimatum was published. In reading the *Times* I said to my wife, "This means European war; we must get back to Roumania."

I went to see Lichnowsky in the morning. He was at the Foreign Office. I went to his house later and found him very much upset. Obviously the Austrian note had exceeded his expectations. He was, however, firmly convinced that there was no danger of war. He was sure that some way of preserving peace would be found. He told me with an ironic smile that he had been instructed to

advocate to the English Cabinet the "localization" of the question at issue between Serbia and Austria. He did not express his opinion of this folly, but it was evident that he thought it ridiculous. He was so certain of peace that he asked me if I were going direct to Aix-les-Bains from Brighton or whether I should return to London for one night. When I answered that it would depend on the political situation he said good-by, being certain that I should go straight on to Aix from Brighton. He was so assured in bearing that I telegraphed to Paris and Aix to announce my arrival.

At Brighton in the afternoon of Saturday and again on Sunday I received communications from London that showed me that Lichnowsky was deceiving himself and that Tchirsky, the German Ambassador at Vienna, was pushing Austria on to take up an overbearing attitude. I telegraphed to my friend Mishu, Roumanian Minister in London, asking him to book places for me in the Ostend Express for Tuesday morning, the 28th of July, and I informed my brother at Aix-les-Bains that I had given up my journey thither.

I returned to London on Monday morning the 27th of July. From the station where my

friend Mishu met me I went straight to Prince Lichnowsky and told him of my agitation and of my decision to go back to Roumania. He told me I was wrong, that there was no possibility of war, not a hundred to one chance of it; that in my place he would stay on in London because it would be so tiresome to go from London to Aix-les-Bains via Bucharest. Insisting on the danger of war, I said, "It is all the more serious—because we must not delude ourselves as to the attitude of England. In spite of the pacifism of its Government, England will certainly come in."

Lichnowsky, forgetting what he had said to me in the spring, said, "Of that I am not so sure as you are." "You are wrong," I said. "I know the English. No one in the world will be able to prevent them mixing themselves up in a war provoked with so much injustice. If you believe the contrary you are profoundly mistaken."

He went on repeating that it might be possible, but that he was not so sure of England's coming in as I was. That is the one weakness that I found in Lichnowsky's judgment at that time. Of course like a great many other people he had been blinded by the Irish question.

I followed Lichnowsky's advice. I gave up my tickets for Tuesday the 28th, but being more distrustful than the German Ambassador I took places on the express for the following day, Wednesday the 29th. It turned out to be the last through train.

On the morning of Tuesday the 28th, when I saw Lichnowsky, he was a changed man. He had begun to lose confidence. He only saw a seven to three chance of peace, and although he assured me of his hope that humanity would be spared such a nameless folly, he said, "Go back to Roumania. There are none too many good brains about; don't deprive your country of yours. I hope you will soon come back, but I understand your going."

I saw him for the last time in the afternoon of Tuesday the 28th. He was pale—a man undone. He told me the peace of the world hung by a thread. I have seldom seen anyone so overcome.

I had a profound conviction that this man was sincere, that he had genuinely worked for peace, that he had served his country with all his strength, and that for all the calamities unchained by the black executioner of Budapesth and the criminals of Berlin he deserves no blame.

I hope Prince Lichnowsky, for whose confidence and friendship I am grateful, will forgive me for witnessing to history in such detail. The day will come when the German people—once more sober—will remember that their true servants are those who did their best to save their country from the torrent of universal hate unloosed against it by this war—a war naked of all excuse.

*Count Berchtold*

## III

### COUNT BERCHTOLD

I HAVE only had two political conversations with Count Berchtold during my life, but they were enough to enable me to take the measure of the man. After each of them I wondered to myself how it was possible that such a person could be Minister of Foreign Affairs to a Great Power. The phenomenon was explained to me by a Viennese journalist. "In our country it is necessary for a Count to succeed a Count." I state this for what it is worth, but I have never succeeded in finding a better reason.

Count Berchtold is a fine-looking man, if one admires that type of person. Gentlemanly, extremely gentlemanly, with good manners—and that is all there is to him. I should have nothing to add if I wanted to paint his portrait.

I was motoring in Northern Italy when Count Berchtold went to Sinaia in September, 1912, to pay a visit to King Charles. A

telegram from Sinaia caught me at Venice. In it a friend informed me that it was considered advisable that I should stop at Vienna on my way home and see Count Berchtold. I understood this to mean that King Charles thought a change in the Austrian Government imminent and that he wished me to be in personal touch with the new director of Austrian policy. I acquainted Count Berchtold with my wish to visit him, and he came in from the country to Vienna in order to receive me.

We chatted for an hour. He tried to explain to me his notorious circular on the decentralization of the Ottoman Empire—the circular that precipitated the outbreak of the Balkan War. I could make nothing of it. He complained that his intentions had been misunderstood everywhere. He laid himself out to reveal them to me, but again I did not understand him any the better. Was the business too intricate, or was I too limited? I don't really know.

Speaking to him of the ticklish condition of Balkan affairs, I said, "If you can keep the peace for another couple of months the situation will be saved. Mountain wars are not undertaken after November." "Why

should the peace be kept for two months only? I am sure that peace is in no way threatened in the Balkans. You can be certain of that," he replied confidently. Did he want to mystify me or did he not know the real situation?

In the course of conversation I spoke of the folly of competitive naval armaments and asked why Austria too should be travelling down the same road. "Why," I asked, "do you want a big fleet? You have no Colonies; you never will have any Colonies, and your oversea trade will never be of much importance. What good is a fleet to you? If you are seeking security against Italy you are committing a fundamental error. You will never be able to fight Italy on the sea, not only because she will always be your superior, but also because, in the event of such a conflict, she would be the ally of France and England, and your Dreadnoughts would never even put to sea. If, on the other hand, you expect to be on Italy's side she will not need your fleet. She would prefer to increase her own. Besides," I added, "I don't understand what Germany is up to either"; and thereupon I repeated to him what I had said to

Kiderlen-Waechter in Berlin some ten months previously.

In reply Count Berchtold explained to me what I had already suspected—that the increase of the Austrian Navy had been demanded by Germany, and that the day was coming when the Austro-German fleets would have a real superiority over the English fleet. He recognized that England could always build more ships than the two Teutonic Empires, but he was sure that she would soon be short of crews. "With their system of voluntary enlistment the supply of recruits will soon fail, whereas we with our compulsory service can always get as many men as we want. Then we could attack and destroy England."

I listened with amazement to this Minister of a Great Power. He did not seem to realize that the day England found she could not get enough volunteers for her Navy, that day she would introduce compulsory service, but that she never could allow herself to be outclassed by Germany at sea.

II

The second time I saw Count Berchtold was on the 11th or 12th of September, 1913.

I am not quite sure of the day. I rather think, however, it was the 11th. He began by making most ample apologies both on his own account and on that of Count Tisza for an incident that had recently occurred at Deva, when the small Roumanian flags on my wife's motor had been torn off by Hungarian police. We then spoke of the great political crisis we had just been through. He told me he had been much criticized and had been accused of not having protected the rights and position of Austria-Hungary. I replied—in accordance with my genuine conviction—that even if it were really true that the designs on Salonika attributed to Austria were but a calumny, Austria had lost nothing through the Balkan crisis, that even her caprices had been satisfied, and that therefore she had absolutely no cause for grievance. I added that he could, if he would, establish good relations with Serbia, more especially as for at least fifteen or twenty years to come the Serbians would be more than busy with their newly acquired territory. I assured him that this was the genuine belief of Monsieur Pasitch, and that if Austria would but show herself a little less hostile everything would once more go smoothly.

We talked, too, of Albania, which he looked upon as his own creation, and seemed surprised that I knew the Albanians and Albanian affairs as well as I did. I must own that on this subject he was very well informed, but all the same he seemed to me completely deluded. For example, he told me that at that moment law and order in Albania was better assured than in any other country in Europe!

This second conversation did not make me change my opinion of Count Berchtold. I am quite persuaded that since the death of Francis Ferdinand it was Tisza and not Berchtold who directed Austrian policy. He has been the plaything of the really strong man. Far from this being an excuse for him, it means that he is doubly guilty, for no one has the right to accept a position that is above his capacity.

I am sure we shall never hear of Count Berchtold in European politics again. That episode is ended.

*The Marquis Pallavicini*

## IV

### THE MARQUIS PALLAVICINI

A PURE Magyar answers to this Italian name. In his youth the Marquis Pallavicini must have been an Imperialist, like so many other Hungarian aristocrats; but at the time I knew him he was already a Magyar in the full acceptance of the word. This is all the more remarkable as it seems the Marquis speaks pretty indifferent Magyar. He has made up for this by bringing up his sons, the children of a charming English woman, to be such chauvinists that they would never even learn their mother's tongue.

Like all good Hungarians, the Marquis Pallavicini has always been an ultra-Serbophobe. It gave him great pleasure to describe to me how, when he was Minister at Belgrade, whenever the poor Serbian Government resisted any demand of Austria, he would discover that all the Serbian pigs were stricken with sudden illness, and how directly the Serbian Government gave in, the pigs

were instantly and miraculously cured, so that their export might be resumed.

No mere words can do justice to the physiognomy of the Marquis Pallavicini, when he was explaining these incidents in Austro-Serbian relations or rather in the martyrdom of Serbia. A smile which was almost a grin pervaded his face, his short-sighted eyes closed till they became invisible, and his piping voice took on a Mephistophelian tone. The very wagging of his head, his short awkward gestures, all seemed to diffuse a smell of sulphur!

The Marquis Pallavicini is the antithesis of the traditional Austrian diplomat. Usually such people are good to look at, they have a presence which impresses the unwary, and one must see a good deal of them to understand their remarkable emptiness. To put it shortly, they look more intelligent than they really are.

In the case of Pallavicini it is just the opposite. His face is not his fortune. He looks rather a simpleton, and yet one would be wrong to trust in his case to appearances. Pallavicini may not be a great mind, but at any rate he is a very observing, very well-informed, and a very subtle person. In a

word, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to Constantinople is a much abler man than he looks, and one would make a blunder if in dealing with him one judged by appearances.

II

I have had relations with the Marquis Pallavicini for years. We have talked together for hours. Of all these conversations three only present themselves to my mind when I recall the past.

The first concerned the domestic politics of Hungary. It was a few weeks prior to the well-remembered general election when the Tisza Government was beaten by the coalition. We were both lunching with Count Larisch at Bucharest. Pallavicini believed that Tisza would be successful. I made a bet with him that the coalition would triumph and win easily, and he never understood how it was that I guessed correctly. Pallavicini was completely unable to understand the compelling force of parliamentary freedom for which the coalition fought, and that is why he was at that time an Imperialist.

Our second talk took place at Constantinople on my return from Athens in November, 1913. The occasion was a reception at

the Roumanian Legation. Pallavicini wanted a *tête-à-tête* with me which I could not refuse him. In this interview, which followed one that I had had with Monsieur de Giers, the Russian representative, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to Turkey strongly advised me to try and improve our relations with Bulgaria. I replied that I asked nothing better, but that as the Bulgarians were discontented and we were satisfied, an understanding between us was unthinkable, unless it were motived by an attack on some third party; and I concluded by saying, "An understanding with Bulgaria is all very well, but at whose expense is it to be?" "At that of Serbia, of course," he replied. This was early in November, 1913!

At the third and last conversation I had with the Marquis Pallavicini—which will without doubt forever be the last—I spoke so much that I feel awkward about referring to it.

It was the spring of 1914. Ever since our military promenade into Bulgaria the Austro-Hungarian press had been irrepressible. At Budapesth two things had been noted, both equally disagreeable to the Magyar oligarchy. One was that the Roumanian expedition across the Danube indicated the first step in

our emancipation from the Austro-Hungarian yoke; the other that nothing had done more for the greater Roumania idea than the new prestige which free Roumania had just acquired. Our soldiers' phrase in the summer of 1913 was, "We pass through Bulgaria in order to get to Transylvania." This phrase expressed a profound truth which even Budapesth could not but realize. The Austrian press opened a most comic campaign on the question of Austro-Roumanian relations. Were they the same? And if they were chilled, how far would the congealing process go? And what ought to be done to make relations once more idyllic? An enormous amount of ink was wasted in Vienna and Budapesth. At Bucharest they were regarded as unwholesome, people had had enough of these false declarations of love, which after all were none too decent, as they presupposed an unnatural attachment on our part.

The Austrians decided to send Pallavicini to Bucharest. He had once lived five years amongst us, and had the reputation of being a convinced anti-Roumanian. They said we could not deceive a man like him as they alleged we had done in the case of so many others.

Pallavicini arrived at Bucharest in the spring of 1914. He stayed there three days; visited King Charles and our politicians, and went away annoyed. Naturally he came to see me. He stayed more than an hour, and frankly told me that he wanted to know whether our alliance with Austria still held good, because if not the Austrians would have to apply elsewhere—to Bulgaria, in short. He told me he had not taken this step yet, which was a lie, but that he would be obliged to do it if he could not count on us. I answered him with diplomatic politeness, which meant nothing. When he returned to the charge I said nothing was more intolerable than to be asked every moment, "Do you love me?" and that that was what the Austrian press was doing all the time. I did not conceal from him that this error in taste had ended by really annoying us.

"You have seen the King," I said, "and you know what his power is. You must at any rate be pleased with the King." He said "No," that the King had declared to him that Roumania would range herself against those who provoked war, and that that was not good enough for him.

And when I put it to him that I no longer

understood the hang of things, as for thirty years it had been dinned into us that it was Russia who wished to provoke war and Austria-Hungary that desired nothing but peace, he dished up to me the old theme of preventive war. He explained to me that it was impossible for Austria-Hungary to remain in the position in which Balkan events had placed her, that Serbia was a menace to her, and that sooner or later war must break out. Austria might *soon* be led to provoke it herself.

It was all very well for me to marshal my arguments against the folly of preventive war and to try and prove the absurdity of talking of the Serbian danger to the Dual Empire; nothing was of any avail. The Marquis insisted at length that it was necessary for Austria to bring about a European war. I have already said that he repeated the word "war" five times during our interview. I made a pencil mark each time he said it.

This conversation with the Marquis Pallavicini was one of the gleams that lit up my mind on the European situation. Throughout the Balkan crisis I had many proofs that Austria-Hungary was trying to provoke war at any cost, but since the treaty of Bucharest I had hoped that the storm was overpast. The

Marquis made me realize, however, that I was mistaken.

Magyar policy was so well served by the assassin Princip that if I had the same mentality as the politicians of Budapesth I should say that they had suggested to him his useless crime.

It would be an exaggeration to suggest that the Marquis Pallavicini was one of the authors of the world war, but he was one of the most active and adroit of the auxiliaries. On this account he may find a place in history.

*Count Goluchowsky*

## V

### COUNT GOLUCHOWSKY

I HAVE very agreeable memories of my intercourse with Count Goluchowsky. He is a great gentleman and his manners are perfect. Moreover, during his long stay in Roumania he did his best to minimize the painful side of the inevitable clash between Roumanian and Magyar interests. I only had one discussion with him that was really disagreeable, and then he forgot himself so far as to tell me straight out that the capitulations were still in force in Roumania. The discussion became so desperately animated that I thought personal communication would be impossible in the future. Count Goluchowsky quite understood the mistake he had made, just as on another occasion he understood a still greater blunder he made in the case of the late Alexander Lahovary. The papers dealing with this incident should be in the possession of Madame Lahovary.

Everyone was grateful to Count Goluchow-

sky for the really pacific orientation he had given to Austrian policy during his long tenure of office. He pushed his pacifism to the point of inventing a kind of *entente* of European Powers to resist the American danger, a clumsy scheme that made people laugh at his expense, but which at any rate showed that he wished to preserve peace amongst the nations of Europe.

It is true that the Emperor Francis Joseph, who was then full of vigor, had made the appointment of Count Goluchowsky to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs conditional on his not making trouble for him, and allowing him to finish his long reign in peace.

The only weakness Count Goluchowsky gave way to at the Ballplatz was his exaggerated hatred of Serbia. He utterly despised the Serbs. His aristocratic prejudices had something to say to this; the Serbs were after all to him a nation of uncouth peasants. Many times did King Charles point out to Count Goluchowsky that he was making a great mistake in refusing consideration to the Serbs, and many times did the Count say that it would only require two monitors at Belgrade to bring "the worthy Serbs" to reason.

In spite of this it would be extremely un-

just not to recognize that Count Goluchowsky, who had never posed as a star of the first magnitude, filled his post of Foreign Minister with distinction. He was not as provocative as Count Aehrenthal, who, though a man of clearly superior capacity, was also liable to make big mistakes.

Count Goluchowsky inspired me with the sort of esteem that one has for a man who has played an important rôle well and who can bear disgrace with dignity.

II

I had not seen Count Goluchowsky for many years when I ran into him in the dining-room of the Hotel Bristol at Vienna at eight o'clock on Thursday, the 30th of July, 1914. I was on my way from London to Bucharest, and was agonized by the thought of the great disaster which might at any moment overwhelm humanity.

Count Goluchowsky was sitting with a young Austrian whom I had met before. He wore a miniature of the Order of the Golden Fleece in the button-hole of his short dinner jacket. This was a characteristic detail. If one happens to be one of the twenty or thirty persons who have been honored with this deco-

ration, it would seem to me a dreadful error in taste to wear it in miniature on a dinner jacket, and it surprised me that a man who represented the last word in breeding could do such a thing.

I went up to the Count, and we naturally talked of the great evil that was menacing the world. He answered with a smile that was almost jovial that the worthy Serbs would now be brought to their senses and that this affair concerned Austria and nobody else. When I told him that it was no longer a Serbian question and that if Austria did not act reasonably Russia and France would be forced to intervene, and that that would mean a European war, he replied with the same smile, the same gay light-heartedness—and his gayety was of a kind I had seldom seen in him—"So much the worse for the worthy Russians and the worthy French." I went on to say that that was not all; that I had just come from London, and could assure him that, although the English Government was the most pacific in history, the logic of events would prove stronger than the will of Governments, and that if Austria persisted in its overbearing attitude, England would fight to her last man and her last shilling.

The smile on Count Goluchowsky's face expanded, and he said, "So much the worse for the worthy English."

At that moment my last meeting with Sir Edward Grey on July 21, 1914, passed like a vision before my eyes. On that occasion he had spoken to me with austere gravity, saying that the situation gave cause for deep anxiety, but that in spite of it he hoped for peace; because for his part he could not imagine that the man existed who could shoulder the responsibility of provoking a calamity which would spell the bankruptcy of civilization, and of which no one in the world could foresee the consequences. There came another vision—that of Monsieur Poincaré, who, on the 1st of January, 1913, spoke to me with most poignant emotion of the terrible eventuality of a European war, a war in which he refused to believe and against which he was working with all his strength.

In memory I re-read Kiderlen-Waechter's last letter to me, written in November, 1912, a few months before his death, the letter of a man who, most unfortunately for Germany and for the world, was no longer with us, a letter which stated that he was convinced that peace would be maintained because at the last

moment the whole world would hesitate to embark on a venture which this time was a question of life or death for all.

With the eyes of my soul I saw Grey, Poincaré, Kiderlen; with my physical eyes I saw the broad smile and the indescribable levity of Count Goluchowsky. And I became more than ever confirmed in my belief that Vienna, now a mere suburb of Budapesth, was the criminal, the great criminal, in that it was ready to plunge humanity at any moment into the unspeakable horror of war.

*August 2, 1914*

# VI

## AUGUST 2, 1914

I ARRIVED back at Sinaia from London at 11:30 A.M. on Sunday, the 2d of August. Germany had declared war on Russia the previous evening, so the horrible slaughter was about to begin. On the Saturday evening in Bucharest I had already heard (in a way that I shall divulge one day) that a Privy Council was to be held at Sinaia on Monday, the 3rd of August, that this Privy Council had been postponed for forty-eight hours in order that I might be present at it, and that King Charles was insisting that Roumania should go into the war on the side of Austria and Germany.

I am keeping back for a future occasion my account of the conversations I had on the evening of Saturday, the 1st of August, at Bucharest, on Sunday, the 2nd of August, at the Sinaia station on my arrival, and still more important, those of Sunday afternoon. As I was leaving the station an invitation

reached me to go and lunch at the Royal Palace at one o'clock. There was barely time to go to my villa and dress—my poor villa that no longer exists.

I realized that in order to convert me to his ideas the King was about to make an onslaught on me. Less than a month ago in that same Palace the King had confided to me the great secret—to wit, that the Emperor William had decided to bring about a European war, which would not take place, however, for three or four years. On that occasion the King had gone so far as to explain to me that this breathing space of three years would suffice to complete both our constitutional reforms and our military preparations.

As I had made up my mind to face him with an absolute *non possumus* attitude at the Privy Council the following day, I was anxious to avoid argument, which must always be a painful business with an elderly monarch, and I made up my mind that during luncheon I would give the talk a turn that would leave him no ray of hope.

Hardly had I sat down next to Queen Elizabeth at the luncheon table than I found I was in a house divided against itself. It was obvious that the King was more than worried,

that the Queen was more bellicose than the King, and that the Crown Princess, now the reigning Queen Marie, was dead against the policy of her uncle and aunt, and did not conceal it from them. It even seemed to me that tears had recently been shed in that Royal Palace.

It was the Queen who first began to speak on the burning question of war. I told her that I was sure that war had been inevitable since the day Austria had addressed her infamous ultimatum to Serbia, and that I knew the ultimatum was the work of the Magyars, of Tisza, Forgasch, Berchtold, who had the support and collaboration of Tchirsky, the German Ambassador at Vienna. I added as a self-evident truth that a German victory meant a Hungarian victory, and therefore was not compatible with maintaining the independence of the Kingdom of Roumania. The King, who sat opposite, and was listening with fixed attention, understood me, and that is why, as I shall explain presently, he spared me from the onslaught I wished to avoid.

Intelligent as she was, and though really a woman above the average, the Queen was not sufficiently versed in politics to understand a word of this. She was all for explaining that

a Magyar victory would mean nothing for a very long time to come, etc. . . . When I told her again of my extreme anxiety in view of the fact that Germany had such a formidable force at her disposal and that if she were successful it would be the end of Roumania, she passed on to another subject.

She asked me what I thought would be the probable consequences of such a war. I answered—with all eyes upon me—that no human being would be presumptuous enough to say he knew or could even guess what all the consequences of such a war might be. "I know, however," I added, "what four of them will be, and these four I will explain to you in a few words. The first consequence will be a revival of international hatreds on such a scale as Europe has not seen for centuries. This is as sure as that the night follows the day.

"The second consequence will be a sudden veering of opinion towards the ideas of the Extreme Left, what we call socialist ideas.

"Of course in the long run nothing that is inherently absurd can triumph, but there is bound in all countries to be a trend to the Extreme Left, once the unloosing of this appalling catastrophe has made the governing classes

appear more incapable in the eyes of the masses than they have hitherto believed them to be.

"In the third place, Madam, there will be what I can only describe as a cataract of crowns. Your Majesty has so often told me you are a Republican that you will hardly be surprised at this prophecy. Only those monarchies which are in truth hereditary presidencies of republics, like the British Royal House, have any chance of escaping this dreadful flood, the flood that must inevitably rise out of a war engineered by absolute monarchs."

I also explained to the Queen that as yet another result of the war, the revolutionary movement, which for several decades had ceased to be political and had become economic, would inevitably become political once more.

"And lastly," I added, "this war will precipitate by at least half a century the establishment of America in the moral hegemony of the white race, an achievement inevitable in any case, but which the war will hasten."

My fourth statement provoked animated discussion. I said I saw nothing in this event to object to, as the most interesting experience humanity had as yet seriously embarked on

was this new effort in civilization on the part of the United States; since it would mean a civilization without prejudices, without castes, without monarchial or aristocratic institutions, and without historic quarrels.

A few days later I published four articles developing these ideas with the titles "The Hatreds," "The Movement to the Left," "The Cataract of Crowns," and "The Coming of America."

When I think of this date, the 2nd of August, 1914, already so remote, I wonder how it is that these conclusions, which at the time appeared to me self-evident, were not so to the world in general, and I reflect once again how tenacious on most of us is the grip of the ideas of the past.

After luncheon we took coffee in the great hall, and I noticed that the King was hesitating between his wish to talk to me and his fear of hearing too soon the refusal for which my animated and provocative conversation at luncheon had prepared him.

Before the King spoke to me the Crown Princess, now the reigning Queen, came up to me with Queen Elizabeth and asked me whether or no England would remain neutral in the war. It should not be forgotten that

this was Sunday, and that it was on the previous Wednesday I had left London. As the Princess spoke to me in English I replied in English, saying that her question surprised me, as she must know as well as I did that England, as in Napoleon's day, would go into the war with her last man and her last shilling. In a nervous voice she then said, "You hear what he says, aunt," and turning to me, "That is what I tell them all the time, and they refuse to understand it. They understand nothing in this house." She then went away with the Queen.

A few minutes later the King addressed me: "You know you must bring two of your friends to the Privy Council to-morrow. Whom have you selected?"

"I have asked several to come to Sinaia, Sir," I replied, "and I will make my choice to-morrow morning."

"Oh, well," said the King, "the selection doesn't really matter, for your party at any rate is disciplined." As I still did not appear to understand, the King added, "You have always said that if ever we went to war we should have to begin by publishing all our treaties of alliance." "Yes, Sir," I replied, "and if because of a treaty honestly inter-

preted we were genuinely forced to go to war, they must be published, because before everything a nation must honor its signature."

This time the King understood and resigned himself to the inevitable. He knew that as Germany had provoked war we were bound neither by the letter nor the spirit of the treaties.

The next day at the Crown Council he tried to put another interpretation on the text of the treaties, but on this Sunday, the 2nd of August, he attempted nothing of the kind.

Many of my recollections of the four terrible years are as sharp and clear as at the moment the events happened. There are few that have remained in my memory so distinctly as this luncheon of the 2nd of August, 1914, in the Royal Palace at Sinaia.

## VII

### KIDERLEN-WAECHTER

For more than ten years I was very intimate with the late Kiderlen-Waechter. That is to say, I had opportunities of seeing him exactly as he was and to know both his good and his bad qualities. Above all Kiderlen was a great intellectual force. There was no doubt about it. One could not be often in his company without realizing that one had to do with the kind of mind which is an ornament to the human race. Kiderlen was nearly all mind. Not that he was lacking in heart, for during his life he gave undoubted proofs of deep and unchanging attachment towards certain people. He loved quietude and adored animals. But taking him all in all, one can without doing him an injustice say that Kiderlen was neither a sentimentalist nor an idealist, but that he was in the last resort a sound working mind, though naturally a mind which was representative of his country and his time.

He had been under the influence of Bis-

marck as well as under that of Holstein, who, like Richelieu's Père Joseph, played a part behind the scenes out of all proportion to his nominal position. From those early associates Kiderlen derived a certain vein of brutality, the mention of which cannot be omitted. Moreover, he lent himself readily to advertisement, because he believed it to be the indispensable adjunct of all political action. It was he and he alone who framed the famous ultimatum to Russia during the Bosnian crisis, although he was at the time only Minister at Bucharest on leave at Berlin. "I knew the Russians were not ready for war, that they could not go to war in any case, and I wanted to make what capital I could out of this knowledge. I wished to show them that Germany, which had been in Russian leading strings since 1815, was now free of them. Never would Schoen and Co. have ventured to do what I did on my own responsibility." It was in this way that he explained to me his overemphasis of Germany's action in this case, an emphasis that contributed appreciably to the unrest of Europe.

Kiderlen never wanted to go to the Foreign Office. "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in our Government," he said, "is the worst of all

posts. If a thing succeeds the Chancellor takes the credit, if it fails the blame lies on the Secretary of State." What he would have really liked was the Embassy at Constantinople. By a whim of the Emperor it was snatched from under his nose and given to Wangenheim, whom the Kaiser often met at Corfu.

Few people know of the way in which Kiderlen was appointed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The story is worth telling. When Bethmann-Hollweg, by the pure caprice of the Kaiser, was appointed Chancellor of the Empire he knew nothing at all about foreign politics. Naturally he looked out for someone who did, and hoping to find the right man in Kiderlen he asked him for a report on the political world situation. Kiderlen at the time was Minister at Bucharest, but doing duty at Berlin. I never saw the report he produced at that time, though I knew of its existence. Since then I have been told that it was copied by Herr von Busche, who was at the time German Minister in Roumania. Bethmann-Hollweg read the report, and promptly told the Emperor that he would only consent to remain Chancellor if Kiderlen was appointed Foreign Minister.

The Emperor had to give in. I say "give in," because it was some years since Kiderlen had been in the Kaiser's good graces. Once he had been greatly appreciated in that quarter on account of his clear thinking and vivacity. No one knew better than he how to tell spicy stories, and the Emperor, who is very fond of them, never got tired of listening to them. But one day the Kaiser chaffed Kiderlen on some private matter. Kiderlen showed himself offended, and his reply was such that he at once fell from royal favor.

One must remember that Kiderlen was exceedingly free in manner with the Kaiser. He was no courtier and never flattered anyone, and to him appreciation and friendship of his Sovereign seemed to be essentially the same as the friendship of other people. Kiderlen was perfectly direct with the Kaiser, so direct that he flatly refused to submit to certain conditions that the Kaiser wished to impose on him at the time of his appointment to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "I shall go to the Foreign Office to do as I think right in that post or I shall not go there at all," was his proud reply, and he had his way.

In the course of a conversation in 1911,

which I will speak of again later on, he said to me, "If I am alive and in office there will be no war between us and England. If ever *he* decides differently *he* will have to find another man. I allow no one to domineer over my conscience."

This sense of dignity was one of the finest traits in Kiderlen's nature. The former president of the Roumanian Council, Monsieur Maioresco, knows something about it, for during the summer of 1912 he thought he understood that Kiderlen had expressed a wish to be asked to stay with the King at Sinaia, and he made the mistake of asking the German Minister whether Kiderlen's position with the Emperor was sufficiently good to warrant such an invitation.

Kiderlen heard about it, was furiously angry, and wrote a crushing letter saying he should like it known that he never had asked and never would ask for an invitation from anyone, no matter whom.

And yet he had a great admiration for King Charles, and kept him informed of everything from Berlin. In the Spring of 1912, he told him for his private information only the great news of the Balkan alliance. He added that he had learned it from a most exceptional

source, which would dry up forever if the King was in the least indiscreet with the news. I was never able to discover who this mysterious informant was.

Another of Kiderlen's characteristics was his wit. For example, one day the Roumanian Minister for Foreign Affairs, General Lahovary, said to him at a diplomatic reception, "I do not understand what you are after in Morocco. France alone has rights in Morocco." Kiderlen replied, "I don't know either. You see my Government only keeps me informed of questions that are supposed to affect Roumania. They did not look upon Morocco in this light; but since you have pointed out to me that they are wrong, I will ask Berlin for a special explanation for your Excellency."

I don't pretend here to draw Kiderlen's portrait. I shall try to do so one day. These few words of introduction are, however, indispensable to the story which follows of the statements made to me by Kiderlen at the time of the Morocco crisis.

## II

When Kiderlen was made Minister of Foreign Affairs he had to leave Roumania. A

few days before his departure we were out walking, as was our habit, and he began to sketch out his program in so far as it concerned German relations with France.

"I have told them," he said, "that every effort at an alliance with France is doomed to failure. It is simply impossible for us to win her friendship. I know better than anyone that France wants peace and that she will never attack us. I am perfectly sure about this, but I also know that if we were attacked by any other Power no Government would be strong enough to prevent France attacking us at the same time. Therefore all we can do is to maintain good peaceable relations with France and not try for anything more ambitious. For this reason I advised *them*" (and by them he meant the Kaiser) "to give up all designs on Morocco, and I explained to them that so long as the Morocco question was open England would side with France all over the world and on all questions at issue between us. Now that would not suit us one little bit. England, of course, cannot abandon France on the Morocco question. She knows well enough that in exchange for something she did not possess in Morocco she received from the French their positive rights in Egypt.

England owes a debt of honor to France. If we want to get rid of all the disadvantages which Anglo-French diplomatic cooperation connotes for us we must give the French a free hand in Morocco and so help England to pay her debt to France. And we shall be sacrificing nothing, for we cannot set ourselves down in Morocco in face of English opposition. Then why maintain this useless tension? If we can get something for ourselves on this occasion so much the better, but we must not make that a condition of the settlement."

"And do you believe that this policy will be adopted?" I asked.

"Of course, as they have appointed me to the Foreign Office, for you know perfectly well that I am not the kind of man who carries out any policy but my own."

"Then," I said, "we need not worry ourselves over the Morocco question. Peace will not be threatened in that quarter."

"Certainly not, and besides you know how truly I long for peace. We have nothing to gain from victory, and in the case of defeat we have only too much to lose. Time is in our favor. Every decade we become stronger than our enemies. You have no conception of

the prodigious strides made in our national economy. And what good would a war be? Admitting that we are victorious; if we take new territory we only increase our difficulties. Then there is another thing you may not have considered. Every big victory is the work of the people, and the people have to be paid for it. We had to pay for the victory of 1870 with that pestilential thing, universal suffrage. After another victory we should have the parliamentary system—and you know what I think about that for us Germans. It would be an irreparable evil. No German would ever submit to party discipline. Every German, every German deputy wants to form his own party, or at least his own group. We have no need of war. If we don't bring it on, nobody will. The Republican *régime* in France is essentially pacific. The English don't want war, and will never provoke it in spite of what the newspapers say. As for Russia, she knows that she cannot make war on us with any chance of success. Of course there will always be delicate questions, and of course there will be anxious moments, but war will not come. You may make your mind easy about Morocco."

Kiderlen went on in this strain. He ex-

plained his whole policy to me, and I believed his declarations to be sincere, for he had never given me any reason to doubt him; but after this talk I was naturally astonished when the Agadir incident occurred.

At the time of the incident I was in London, and on the evening Lloyd George made his famous speech at the Mansion House I had some people dining with me at the Carlton. After dinner a friend who had heard the speech came in and repeated the gist of it, and when he told me that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was well known to be most peacefully inclined, had *read* the passage relating to Foreign Affairs from a slip of paper, I realized how grave the situation was, and shivered at the idea of European war.

Calm soon reigned again, for Germany wisely withdrew. I breathed freely, but from that moment German policy became for me an enigma.

III

In the autumn of 1911 I went to Brussels for a family gathering. On my way home I stopped at Berlin to pay my friend Kiderlen a long-promised visit. I stayed three days and

met him continually, but the conversation on the first day was the most interesting. Kiderlen had invited me to lunch with him *alone*. He was late in arriving, because he had been detained at the Reichstag, where he had been heckled over what was called his Moroccan defeat. There was one man in particular, the socialist deputy Ledebour, who was a perfect nightmare to Kiderlen.

Before he arrived I looked round his study, which was littered with papers and maps. There were a few photographs, of course—mostly of kings. As for photographs of ordinary human beings I only saw three, that of an Austrian whose name I forget, that of Monsieur Cambon, with an autograph and dedication, and my own. Cambon and I were often said by Kiderlen to be alike, and he used to say that we were the only foreigners he talked frankly to, because we had never told him anything but the truth.

Kiderlen was very tired, and we sat down to luncheon at once. The wonderful Sèvres given him by the President of the French Republic in memory of the agreement of 1909, was on the table. "That is the price of treason," he said jokingly.

During luncheon and afterwards until four

o'clock we had leisure to discuss every question that interested us. Of course I did not conceal my astonishment over his Moroccan policy, which had nearly brought on a war with England, a war which he had always characterized as absurd. He explained that he never meant actually to go to war, but that his only object was that of settling the Morocco question once and for all.

He alleged that France was not carrying out the agreement reached in 1909, and that he had to deal her a blow to make her see that things were serious. He maintained that the blow had done its work, because they had subsequently arrived at an understanding, and that in future relations with France would be normal and relations with England might become friendly. He did not admit to me what I well knew to be his real object—namely, to test the solidity of the Anglo-French understanding and if possible to smash it. He complained that he was growing more and more unpopular owing to his wish to avoid war, and he assured me in the most categorical manner that the Emperor was at one with him in keeping the peace, and this in spite of the frankly bellicose attitude of the whole imperial family, including those who had never

before mixed themselves up in politics. He told me at some length of a conversation he had had with the Crown Prince in that same room in the chair I was then occupying, a conversation which was entirely to Kiderlen's credit. He told me that the Crown Prince was worse than a ninny, and that he had said to him that it was not in the society of little officer boys that politics could be learned, and that he ought not to meddle with matters which he did not understand.

Referring once more to Anglo-German relations, he again told me of his wish to reach an understanding with England. He did not conceal from me what I already knew so well that, like Bismarck, he detested England principally on account of her parliamentary institutions, but he told me that he believed what Bismarck had once written to Holstein was true, that England was one of the great conservative factors of the world, and it was not in anyone's interest to destroy it. In this letter Bismarck added that the day England became revolutionary the whole world would become revolutionary too.

"But if you are so anxious to come to an understanding with England," I said, "why don't you do the one thing to ensure it? Why

do you refuse to compromise on the question of naval armament? What is your object in pushing to its limit the competitive policy? I understood your attitude when it was still a question of your becoming the second great sea-power of the world. That you already are, and what more do you want? Do you aspire to be not only the greatest military power in the world, but also the greatest naval power? That would mean universal domination, and it is not realizable. Others have tried it, Spain and France, for example, but they went under. You are too intelligent not to understand that until she has been utterly crushed it is impossible for England to let herself be outbuilt on the sea. You may build five dreadnoughts, she will build thirteen. Where are you going to stop? You are heading straight for a war with England, and that, you know, will be no joke. Admitting for a moment that you gain the victory. How long will that last? You would raise against yourself a world coalition. So hated would you be that the very rabbits would enroll themselves against you. Don't follow dreams—and what you are after now is a dream."

Kiderlen replied rather bitterly, "I wanted to have an understanding over the limitation

of armaments, but I couldn't manage it. I have said everything you have said to me, though perhaps I have not put it so well. I have said it to Tirpitz, who was sitting in this armchair of mine. I was sitting in yours."

"And?"

"I did not succeed in convincing him," he answered.

"But the Emperor?" I asked.

"He sided with Tirpitz."

And then he went on to asseverate that in spite of this he would do all he possibly could to come to an agreement with England. He suggested even that I should tell my friends in London to send him as Ambassador someone who had a great position in England, so that the work would not have to be done twice over, in London and Berlin. We then went on to talk about the agreement he had just concluded with France. He assured me that if by accident the French Parliament rejected the agreement it would mean war. The agreement represented the maximum concession that the people of Germany would stand.

That very day I took pains to write my impressions to a friend in Paris. My friend showed my letter to M. Caillaux, then Prime

Minister, who read it to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate.

This was the last occasion on which I had any prolonged talk with Kiderlen. From this time on we simply wrote to each other.

On the evening of the 30th of December, 1912, I was due to meet him at Stuttgart, where he had been spending the Christmas holidays, and where he remained. At the railway station at Salzbourg I heard of his most unexpected death, and the next day at Stuttgart they told me that my name was one of the last words he had spoken.

Perhaps it was only an illusion of friendship, but I cannot help believing that in Kiderlen we lost one of the mainstays of peace. Not that my friend was a sentimentalist, far from it; but he was a man of genuinely well-set mind, and his real intellect kept him to the last of the opinion that a war of Germany against the world was altogether a bad business.

*Count Aehrenthal*

# VIII

## COUNT AEHRENTHAL

Count Aehrenthal was the most brilliant Austrian Foreign Minister since the days of Beust. His capacity is the measure of his blunders. Without exaggerating, one may say that he was to a great extent the author of the war. As a matter of fact, from 1866 down to this day the Hapsburgs have maintained a prudent political reserve, and though Count Andrassy gave himself airs at the time of the Berlin Congress everyone knew that it was nothing but showing off. Aehrenthal alone took the idea seriously that Austria-Hungary was still a great power and destined to act an important part in the world's affairs. On several occasions he tried to play first fiddle in the European orchestra, to the great disgust of Berlin, which could not bear that Austria should even pretend to emancipate herself from its yoke.

The key to Count Aehrenthal's active and dangerous policy must be sought in a personal

matter. He was extraordinarily intelligent for an Austrian, and his quickness of understanding, his faculty for adaptation, his charming vivacity can only be explained by the drop of Jewish blood that ran in his veins.

Count Aehrenthal knew his own value, especially when he compared himself with other Austrian diplomats. He was very ambitious and believed he was destined for great things, and he intended to use the power of the monarchy for his own aggrandizement and personal fame.

He was a Bohemian and detested Slavs. I remember a day when he received news of anti-German excesses in Prague. "Czechs," he said, "have such hard heads that they have to be broken in order to make them understand anything."

He had been in Russia for a long time, and knew all the weaknesses of that colossus. In his thirst for success he exaggerated them and underestimated the infinite resources of her clumsy organism.

I saw a great deal of Count Aehrenthal during his long stay in Roumania, and have many letters from him. One day he tried to do me an irreparable injury in making use of some information he had dragged out of me at my

own luncheon table. I naturally resented this very much, and though, luckily for me, I was able to counter his maneuver in time, our relations after this became purely official.

On the eve of his final departure from Roumania, he let me know that he wished to do more than leave a p.p.c. card on me, and that he would like to see me. In this last interview he told me that we should probably both serve our countries for some time to come, that we should therefore have to meet each other, and that it would be better to forget the past. I told him that as he had not succeeded in injuring me and as he believed he was serving his country in trying to do so, I was quite willing to resume our old footing.

Later on when he was transferred from the Embassy at Petrograd to the Foreign Office I used to go and see him. I am now going to tell of two of those interviews.

The first took place on a September day in 1909 or 1910. I don't know which, I only know that it was after Tangier and before Agadir.

He asked me what impressions I brought back from my three months' tour in France and England.

"I brought back two impressions," I said.

"The first is that the alliance between England and France cannot be broken—at any rate in this generation. It is firmer even than your alliance with Germany."

"But," he objected, "there is no treaty of alliance."

"Of course there is no treaty, but there is something better. Don't forget that those two nations are free nations governing themselves. Well, they are firmly convinced that their interests are the same, and they have decided to act together. No government could break such an agreement which springs from the mind of the two peoples."

"But such an alliance is ridiculous!" he exclaimed. "France stands to gain nothing from England, whereas from Germany she could have anything she wanted."

"France realizes," I answered, "that in allying herself with Germany she would be allying herself against England. If England were overcome France would be nothing but the vassal of Germany. That is a position you have accepted for yourselves. France has too glorious a history behind her to accept a similar position without being crushed first."

"What!" said he briskly. "Austria is Germany's vassal?"

"Yes, just as Roumania is the vassal of Austria." I said this to coat the bitter pill.

"And what was your second impression?"

"I will tell you in a few words. France is no longer afraid. She desires peace passionately; she will never provoke war; but she is no longer afraid. Henceforth if you bully her realize that it means war. The time for bluffing is gone by. If you want war that is another thing, but intimidation and bluff will no longer work."

"But it is mad," he said. "The French army, far from being stronger than it was a few years ago, is much weaker."

"Fear," I said, "is a physical question. One may be weak and yet not be afraid. For one reason and another, because perhaps she has been too much bullied in the past, France, who was afraid at the Tangier crisis, is now no longer afraid; of that I am profoundly convinced."

"It is very odd," said Aehrenthal in ending the conversation; "our ambassadors have not formed the same conclusions as you have."

"I can only give you my own," I replied, and we passed on to talk of other things.

## II

The last time I saw Count Aehrenthal was during the autumn of 1911, a few months before his death.

His illness had marked him heavily. He had been spending a few weeks in the beautiful surroundings of Mendel—henceforward I hope to be Mendola—but he was not much better for it. There was something very peculiar about his condition, something I had never seen before. He had kept his clearness of mind intact, but he found great difficulty in expressing himself—he stammered. He only did this for the first few words of a sentence. Once he had got a phrase out the rest went easily. And this took place each time that he began to speak. I must leave the explanation of this symptom to the doctors.

Count Aehrenthal was embittered, very much embittered, by his struggles with the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his protégé, Conrad von Hoetzendorf, whom he had just triumphed over. He did not explain things straight out to me, but he let me understand.

"There are people who think I was wrong in preventing war with Italy," he said. "They say that Italy would never in any case fight

on our side and that it would have been better to square accounts now. But I think I was right. Even if Italy never fights on our side we should be quite wrong to attack an ally when she was engaged elsewhere."

Naturally I agreed with him.

And then forthwith we returned to the subject that we had so often discussed at Bucharest.

I had always maintained that monarchies were doomed and that only those monarchies which were literally and really constitutional had any chance of surviving; the rest seemed to me to be nearer their end than anyone believed. Aehrenthal, absolutist and reactionary as he always was, fought this opinion of mine bitterly. Imagine my surprise at finding Count Aehrenthal almost converted to republicanism.

He told me that on reflection he had changed his mind, and was no longer prejudiced against the republican system. He also explained that it was chiefly on account of foreign policy that he had once believed so firmly in the monarchical system.

"But now," he said, "France gives the lie to all my theories. The foreign policy of the French Republic is skillfully conducted and

undoubtedly successful. Although France, thanks to her political institutions, uses up more men than any other country, she has a constant supply of first-rate men at her helm. Look at her diplomacy. The whole German and Austrian Diplomatic Corps together are not worth the brothers Cambon and Barrère, to mention only these three."

"What," I said laughingly, "and it is you, Count Aehrenthal—here in the Ballplatz, facing the portraits of Metternich and Kaunitz—who tell me that!"

"Yes, I do. Life teaches us many things," he replied.

I understood more clearly than ever how greatly Aehrenthal must have suffered recently from the interference of Francis Ferdinand in his policy. He who had been so sure of his mastery over the world of archdukes had himself experienced the bitterness, the indignity of despotic government. And before his death he had a revulsion of feeling that gave him a vision of certain truths, a vision that men who pass their lives as slaves never attain to. Once again I recognized the signs of Jewish blood; without it no Austrian Count and Foreign Minister of his Apostolic Majesty could have spoken in such a fashion.

None the less, Aehrenthal bears his share of the responsibility for the war. He wished to live in history, he seriously wished to expand Austria-Hungary. But all the same in pressing this policy he had his tongue in his cheek. The Magyar party adopted his policy as its own, and the result is that Austria-Hungary has perished.

It is the strongest men who are liable to commit the worst mistakes.

*Count Czernin*

# IX

## COUNT CZERNIN

The last time I talked politics with Count Czernin, a conversation to which I shall have occasion to refer again, the Austrian minister began by saying that he had a great favor to ask me.

It was a few days after the fall of Lemberg in 1914. "We shall soon be at war with each other," he said. "But after the war we shall have peace. Promise me that when once the war is over and I have the pleasure of meeting you again, we shall be the same friends as ever." He punctuated his request with compliments which it is not for me to repeat.

As he was in my house I had to make a civil answer. I hunted about for something to say, and then with a certain measure of embarrassment I said something of this kind: "I don't know whether we are going to be at war or not. But if we were it would only be because our respective nations believed that it was their interest or their duty to fight one

another. We are both of us civilized men. There is no earthly reason why after the war we should not in our individual capacity be friends again."

At that time I did not believe Count Czernin was capable of doing what he did later on, when he cancelled my Austrian decoration and, denying his own words, deliberately lied to me.

If I had known him better my answer would have been quite different, but Count Czernin is really a most accomplished type of Austrian.

We all know, and we all say, that there is no such thing as an Austrian nation. It is true in the real sense of the word. An Austrian people in the sense of a collection of men having a collective conscience does not exist and could not exist. But Austrians do exist. They are members of a clique recruited from among the nations of the earth, serving the Hapsburgs from father to son, living on the Imperial favor and forming a sort of civilian general staff to that family—which is the only link existing amongst the nations composing the Empire.[1] Amongst themselves these people talk German, but intellectually they are

[1] This was written before the flight of the Austrian Emperor

not Germans. Though by origin they may be Czech, Polish, Italian, Croatian, German, yet they are not Czechs or Poles or Italians or Croats or Germans. Until quite recently they could even be of Magyar origin without, however, being really Magyars. All these people, all the members of this little clique, are Austrians. They are, in fact, the only Austrians in the world. Their essential characteristic is the absence of real intelligence, yet they are not quite as innocent as they look, for they have bureaucratic traditions and a guile that stands them in lieu of intelligence.

When one first sees them one is charmed by their beautiful manners and what I can only describe as their encyclopedic polish. This prevents one realizing their hopeless nonentity. Then one is liable to err in the other direction. From astonishment at their ignorance and want of brain one comes to believe them to be harmless. It is only after a time that one learns the real truth. Then one perceives that at bottom these people are rogues, and that one should not reckon too much on their intellectual nonentity.

Count Czernin is a most typical Austrian, and intercourse with him is most agreeable, as his manners, at any rate in appearance, are

perfectly charming. He has a rudimentary intelligence, but it is amply supplemented by guile. He has, too, a fund of humor which sometimes might almost be regarded as wit. Thus one day he said to Radef, a former Bulgarian comitadji, "Neither you nor I will ever make good diplomats, because I never lie and you never speak the truth." And again, to his colleague Busche, who was always boasting about the superiority of Germany to poor Austria, he said, "But at least there is one point on which you will have to admit that Austria is superior to Germany." And when Busche, who was intelligent but rather uncouth, persisted that this was impossible, Czernin said slyly, "We have a better ally than Germany has!"

Count Czernin was in retirement in 1913 when Vienna thought fit to replace Count Fürstenberg, the then minister to Roumania, because he had failed to prevent Roumania's making war on Bulgaria, the Peace of Bucharest as the consequence.

The Archduke Francis Ferdinand picked out Czernin for the post. He had always intended one day to make him Minister of Foreign Affairs. In the meantime he sent him to Bucharest with the definite mission of patch-

ing up Austro-Roumanian relations at the price of serious concessions in Transylvania which he meant the Maygars to make to the Roumanians. I met Count Czernin for the first time immediately after his arrival at the opening of an industrial museum.

In spite of the crowd all around us Count Czernin took me into a corner and explained that he had only come to Bucharest with a view to consolidating our relations by concessions which the Magyars were to make to us. He assured me that these concessions would be made whether Budapesth liked it or not. In the long run it was certain that Budapesth would see reason, because not only was it a matter of justice, but it was absolutely necessary. And in conclusion he said, "Unless the Magyars make large concessions the Austro-Roumanian alliance cannot go on."

In speaking like this he showed true courage, and I have no doubt that he was himself deluded as to the possibility of serious concessions. It was distinctly honorable on the part of an Austro-Hungarian Minister to admit that he regarded them as absolutely necessary. At the same time for him to tell me so bluntly in the middle of a crowd at our first meeting seemed to me a very singular proceeding, but

it only strengthened my opinion of Austrian diplomats.

Later on it became evident even to Count Czernin that the tale of Magyar concessions to Roumania was nothing but an Arabian Nights' romance, and each time I saw him he referred to it less explicitly. It was easy to see that he felt awkward and knew that he had gone too far, and that he was looking out for an honorable way of retreat.

At the beginning of the world war our relations were most correct, but our political conversations were confined to the ordinary gossip of society.

When I returned from England in the early days of the war on the eve of the Privy Council of August 3rd at Sinaia I often met Count Czernin, who like me had his headquarters at Sinaia. He was trying like so many others to defend Austria against the accusation of having unchained the war. I protested vigorously, and he thereupon asked me to explain to him unreservedly what made me affirm the contrary. At that time Waldhausen, the German Minister, Czernin and I had a talk at the Palace Hotel at Sinaia which lasted nearly three hours. Having obtained permission to speak freely, and taking no notice of their na-

tionality, I made out a regular indictment of Germany, and of Austria in particular. I produced so many proofs, quoted so many facts of which the public was still ignorant, and used such crude language that of necessity my relations with Count Czernin were affected. He naturally pretended that I was mistaken, but congratulated me on my frankness and courage, at the same time stating that he should look upon me as one of the most implacable enemies of his country.

If I repeated this conversation it would consist chiefly in a monologue, and it would only mean reiterating all I have said and written on the origin of the war, and just a few other things that I have not yet made public. It would have little or nothing to do with Count Czernin.

From that day we ceased to call on each other, but this did not prevent our talking if we happened to meet. It was not till some weeks later, when I had proof of his having taken part in the hateful work of political corruption, that we ceased to bow to each other.

One day on the boulevard at Sinaia he stopped and asked me if it were true that Talaat and Zaimis were coming to Roumania

in order to try and come to an arrangement over the Turco-Greek difficulty about the Islands.

When I answered that it was true, he asked me with a malicious smile if I believed Talaat was really coming for that purpose.

I straightway said "No," and added that Talaat had stayed at Sofia on his way and that it was obvious that he was coming to Roumania to try and arrange a Turco-Bulgar-Roumanian alliance against Russia.

"Well," said Czernin, "and if they make a proposition of the kind what are you going to say?"

"I am not the Government," I said, "but if I were and a proposition of this kind were put forward, I should tell them quite straight out that if I wanted to go hand in hand with Austria I should discuss the matter with her and not with her household servants."

Czernin thought my language rather picturesque and dropped the subject.

A few days after Lemberg had fallen Count Czernin telephoned to know whether I could see him. He said he wanted to bring me back some books I had lent him. I naturally said "Yes," all the more willingly as it was several weeks since he had been to see me. I was curi-

ous to know why he was coming; the books were too transparent an excuse. I received him in my study; it was our last conversation, and it is so strange as to be worth recording.

Count Czernin began by referring to a matter I have already mentioned, the question of our private friendship after the war. Just as I was saying that neither war nor peace depended on me, he said, "You are going to make war on us. That is self-evident. It is your interest and your duty to do so. If I were a Roumanian I would attack Austria, and I cannot see why you should not do what I should do in your place. Of course it is not very pretty to go for an ally, but history is made up of such rascalities, Austrian history as much as that of any other state, and I don't see why Roumania should be the only exception;" and then, as I told him he was making me feel perfectly at home, he went on: "All the same I must ask one thing of you. Just wait for a fortnight. In a fortnight the whole military situation will have changed in our favor, and whatever your present interest may be in making war on us you will then see that it would be a mistake." I smiled, and Czernin went on, "No, not a fortnight, let us say three weeks; that is all I ask of you. If the situa-

tion has not changed in three weeks, attack us. I should do so in your place. I insist, however, on the three weeks, for, mark you, this will be a war of extermination. If we are victorious we shall suppress Roumania. If we are beaten Austria-Hungary will cease to exist."

I again said that the war did not depend on me, and that judging from what I saw he might count, not on three weeks, but a far longer time, even if war were eventually to break out between us. I added that it seemed an exaggeration to talk of extermination, and went on to say, "Our circumstances are in no way parallel. For example, if Roumania were suppressed I should lose everything, and should be but a pariah wandering through the world, while you, who are by way of being a good German, stand to lose nothing when Austria disappears. You may even be a gainer by it, as Germany can never be suppressed."

On this we parted. It was in the afternoon, and in the evening I heard from Filipesco that Czernin had that very day said precisely the same things to him.

This last talk with Count Czernin is perhaps the strangest I ever had with any diplo-

mat. For the representative of Austria-Hungary to say that if he were a Roumanian he would make war on Austria because it was the interest and duty of Roumania so to do would have been extraordinary and utterly incredible if I had not myself heard it.

It seems to me that after this talk it was not becoming in Count Czernin to bring himself to treat the King of Roumania and our statesmen in the way he did. He had no right to ask us to be blinder than he was himself to the interest and duty of Roumania.

*Count Mensdorff*

# X

## COUNT MENSDORFF

I ARRIVED in London on the 12th of July, 1914, in the evening. I was much worried, although on the 9th of July, only three days earlier, King Charles had positively assured me that peace would be preserved for at least three years longer. It was quite impossible for me to forget the horrible way in which the Marquis Pallavicini had spoken to me in the spring of 1914, and from my own observation during the whole of the Balkan crisis I knew that Austria really wanted war.

So when the Serajevo outrage occurred it was easy for me to appraise the full gravity of the situation. And when I saw Austria—in other words, Count Tisza, who since the death of Francis Ferdinand was virtually dictator of the Empire—preserve an inscrutable attitude while preparing a so-called case, but giving no indication of her intentions, my anxiety deepened still further.

It was in this state of mind that I arrived in London.

There I found a very strange situation. A large section of the Press was in all good faith friendly to Austria. In England the old notion of a pacific Austria necessary to the balance of power in Europe still obtained. I must admit that the Austrian Ambassador, Count Mensdorff, and his friends had done their work well. It is well known that the English Press is immune against any form of corruption, but, on the other hand, personal relations and friendships play a great part in this journalistic world, where people are inclined to be over-confiding because they are fundamentally honest. The soil, too, was favorable. England had not yet forgotten the horror felt over the assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga.

Count Mensdorff was the embodiment of the best type of Austrian diplomat. He was a true aristocrat and a fine-looking man, but he was not well educated and not at all intelligent, though perhaps on this account all the more plausible and untrustworthy.

During the preceding weeks he had been assiduously making up to journalists. As Prince Lichnowsky said to me at the time,

"He is concocting something or other." This "something" obviously was to launch English public opinion on the wrong scent—in other words, to spread the suspicion that Serbia was particularly responsible for the assassination of the Archduke, since she had been over-tolerant of revolutionary movements. Count Mensdorff's agents had had recourse to an old device of Austrian diplomacy, a forgery. Some rascal had given *John Bull* a document purporting to have emanated from the Serbian Legation in London which proved that the assassination of the Archduke was the work of the Government of Belgrade. When I met the Serbian Minister, M. Boscovitch, at St. Ann's Hill, the house of my friend, Sir Albert Rollit, he asked me as to the propriety of bringing a libel action against *John Bull*. The document seemed to me such an obvious fabrication that I said it was unnecessary. War settled the question of this new Austrian forgery.

The English Press was on the wrong tack. It honestly believed that Austria was out for the punishment of the assassins, and never for a moment suspected the criminal designs of the Hapsburgs.

I realized at once that this attitude of the

English Press might well constitute a real danger to the peace of Europe. I was positive that the Government of Vienna, which was totally incapable of believing in disinterested motives or in frank dealing, would read heaven knows what ultra-pacific tendencies into the English papers and that it would encourage them to make most unreasonable demands on Serbia. And I feared this all the more, as I found out that Sir Edward Grey had completely failed in obtaining any light as to the intended demands of Austria.

I made up my mind to do the best I could in my own modest capacity, and in the afternoon in my own room at the Ritz I saw Mr. Steed, then foreign editor of the *Times*, and author of the well-known book on the Hapsburg Monarchy; Mr. Gwynne, editor of the *Morning Post*, a friend of twenty-five years' standing; and Professor Gerothwohl, who wrote for the *Standard*.

My friends knew Vienna too well to be taken in, but all around them were the many victims of Count Mensdorff's honeyed tongue.

I explained to them that, knowing as I did the bellicose disposition of Austria, they were endangering the peace of Europe in encouraging her. I begged them in the interests of

peace to warn Austria, and to do it in a pretty stiff tone, the only tone understood in Vienna and Budapesth. I added that I took upon myself full responsibility for this Press campaign, which I believed to be useful, not only in the interests of peace, but of the wretched Hapsburg Monarchy itself.

On the following morning, both the *Times* and the *Morning Post* published vehement leaders denouncing the Austrian plot and giving the Hapsburgs a warning which should have prevented them from taking the plunge if the Tisza-Forgasch-Berchtold trio had not been completely demented. At any rate English public opinion was awakened. Most of the Press followed the example given by the *Times* and *Morning Post.* The alarm signal had been given.

When, a few days later, on the morning of the 24th, Austria's monstrous ultimatum appeared, everything was made clear even to the most unbelieving. At any rate in England prejudice in favor of Austria was dead forever.

We who had given the alarm signal were right. How happy we should have been to have been wrong!

# *England's Antipathy to War*

# XI

## ENGLAND'S ANTIPATHY TO WAR

DURING my long official life I have made and received too many confidences not to know the obligations attaching to my position. It is only the insistence with which Germany disseminates the false legend that the war is the work of the British Empire that forces me to depart from my usual discretion, which I believe up till now has been faultless.

I am going to tell of two personal matters, the first of which dates from January, 1913.

I was then in London, and through conversation with the British Foreign Minister and other authoritative representatives of English thought I had acquired a deep conviction that England passionately longed for peace. For this reason I believed her relations with Germany—who at the moment was usefully employed in muzzling the warlike proclivities of her ally, Austria-Hungary—were becoming closer and more cordial. Thus on the 7th of January, 1913, I allowed myself to write to

the late King Charles telling him that given the unshakable determination of England and Germany to prevent European war, I was certain it would never break out. But that, as people will say, is ancient history.

Well, on Tuesday, the 21st of July, 1914, two days before the Austrian ultimatum was presented to Serbia, I had the honor of being received in a long audience by Sir Edward Grey,[1] Minister of Foreign Affairs to the British Empire.

I wanted to get him to assist the State of Albania to get out of the *impasse* it was in. And I tried to convince him of the necessity of sending an international contingent to Albania and of putting a little more money at the disposal of the Prince of Wied.

After explaining to him the European aspect of Albanian difficulties, I pointed out that Albania was liable to reduce Austria to the state of nerves she had been in during the Balkan war. This is literally what I said: "I know that there are people who imagine that a war between Austria and Italy may be the result of tolerating the present mix-up in Albania and that it is a way of detaching Italy

[1] Now Viscount Grey.

from the Triple Alliance, but this would be a short-sighted, dangerous policy."

Sir Edward Grey, in a tone of real sincerity—that particular sincerity of English statesmen which imposes respect and confidence in the world—interrupted me with a display of emotion rare in such a collected person, saying, "But I do not want to detach Italy from the Triple Alliance and I have never tried to do so. I have always realized that if Italy left the Triple Alliance and joined France and Russia the combination against Germany and Austria would become so powerful that the peace of Europe, which rests on the balance of power, would be endangered. I want nothing but peace, I work for nothing but peace." And in order that we may fully realize the importance of this communication, I must add that a few minutes later Sir Edward Grey spoke to me of the extreme gravity of the political situation owing to the Austro-Serbian quarrel. He was fully aware of the possibilities inherent in the situation, and was all the more acutely anxious, as it had been impossible for him to discover what Austria's terms to Serbia were.

This happened forty-eight hours before the fatal ultimatum which was, and will remain,

one of the most tragic blots on the escutcheon of European history. The ultimatum will also be remembered as the most formidable blow ever delivered at small nations whose existence, compared with that of the large nations, is so difficult, so anxious, and so painful.

# *The Responsibility for the War*

## XII

### THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR

THE true history of the responsibility for the war may be summed up as follows:

Austria, who had never given up the idea of obtaining compensation in the Balkan Peninsula for her losses in Italy, allowed the Turco-Balkan war of 1912 to take place, because she, like Germany, was convinced that the Turks would win. Was there not in Turkey a Military Mission, and was it possible to think that the pupils of the Germans could be beaten? Was it thinkable that wretched serfs could be of serious military value?

The defeat of the Turks falsified all the calculations of Austria, and from that moment she lost her head and conceived the project of plunging Europe into blood and fire in order to regain for herself the prestige which she thought had passed away from her.

I repeat the charge that during the whole period between the battle of Lule-Burgas un-

til the Peace of London, Austria wished to provoke a European war.

The Anglo-German *entente* for preserving the benefits of peace for Europe, an *entente* that at the time was genuine, proved an insuperable barrier to the prospects of Austria. Nevertheless she did not give up her intentions. With remarkable intuition as to human weakness she scented the possibility of war amongst the victors, and she encouraged Bulgaria to commit the fatal act which brought it about.

When she found herself once more mistaken in her calculations and Bulgaria beaten by the hated Serbs, Austria decided herself to fall upon Serbia—M. Giolitti has given us irrefutable proofs of this. And now we are going to allow ourselves to imitate M. Giolitti and produce another proof which hitherto has remained unknown.

In May, 1913, Count Berchtold charged the Austro-Hungarian Minister in Bucharest to make a communication to the Roumanian Government (to whom both the Serbs and the Greeks had appealed in view of the possibility of attack by Bulgaria), and the communication was this: "Austria will defend Bulgaria by force of arms." In other words, Rou-

mania, although the ally of Austria, would be attacked by Austria if she opposed the crushing of Serbia!

Count Andrassy can put his hands on this document in the Ballplatz, but our Minister of Foreign Affairs will find no copy of it in our archives, because Count Berchtold's note was only read to a single minister—myself. Though I was not the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prince Fürstenberg read it aloud to me, and my reply was such that he refrained from delivering it to the person for whom it was really intended.

Events gradually became as clear as the day. On two different occasions in 1913 Austria-Hungary tried to make war on Serbia. She was prevented from doing so by Germany, Italy and Roumania, but she did not give up the idea.

In April, 1914, at Bucharest she put forward the idea of a preventive war very seriously. When the crime of Serajevo took place she was on the alert, we know with what result.

It is now quite certain that the tragedy of Serajevo was a pretext and not a cause of the war. It is known that the person guilty of provoking this monstrous conflict was Count

Tisza who, because of his great ability, was in charge of Austrian policy during the months that led up to the war.

It is no use to argue that, in the days immediately preceding the declaration of war, Count Tisza and Berchtold, realizing that their game was turning into a tragedy, took fright and wished to retreat, but were prevented from doing so by the impatience of the German Emperor.

Count Tisza, who had been miraculously delivered from the Archduke Francis Ferdinand—whose anti-Magyarism was an open secret—saw in this very incident an unique opportunity of consolidating the dominion of the Magyars in Hungary and the domination of Hungary in the Empire. He hurled himself into the adventure with his overbearing energy, that brutal energy which had so often been exercised in the Parliament at Budapesth.

Tisza took the risk of Europe being drenched in blood in order that Magyarism might triumph. He succeeded, but it is only just that among those things which have been struck down by the eternal Nemesis, the crime of Magyarism should be the most heavily punished.

*King Charles of Roumania*

# XIII

## KING CHARLES OF ROUMANIA

I do not propose here to draw a portrait or even a sketch of King Charles. One day it is my intention to outline in detail the features of this King I knew so well, who without being a great man was undeniably a personality. I will do it with complete impartiality, for I have never been—and it is not in me to be—a courtier, but at the same time with the sympathy I naturally feel for a sovereign whose adviser I was during so many years. For the moment I only wish to say enough to render intelligible his attitude during the war.

King Charles was one of those spirits, cast in a narrow circumscribed mold, which are just as incapable of a folly as of action on a great scale. He had impeccable tact, a marvelous capacity for seeing both sides of every question, tireless industry, a sound sense which could easily be mistaken for genuine intelligence, a deep sense of duty, cultivation unusual in a monarch, perfect manners, a pa-

tience which sometimes seemed, quite wrongly, like indifference, and with all this a great and quite legitimate regard for what history would say of him in the future. For normal times, therefore, King Charles was remarkably well equipped. But for moments of crisis the characteristics I have enumerated are inadequate and almost tiresome. With all his powers, King Carl, whose physical courage was assuredly beyond question, was lacking in moral courage, and the very idea of initiative was foreign to him. It is this combination of qualities and defects, emphasized by age, which explains the part played by the King during the world war. So far as it specially relates to Roumanian policy I do not propose to describe his attitude. The whole situation will be dealt with fully in my coming Memoirs on the origin of the war and the share taken in it by Roumania.

To tell all I know about those who have played any part in these unprecedented circumstances is a debt I owe to history, and perhaps, when everything that took place behind the scenes is known, some moments of deplorable hesitation and moral weakness, otherwise inexplicable, will be understood. Inevitably I shall have to concern myself from the outset

with the position of King Charles, not only for what he did himself, but above all for what others did in their eagerness to anticipate his thoughts and his wishes. I desire now only to relate his opinions on the world war and its consequences.

King Charles, it is only fair to say, was no admirer of the Emperor William. The Kaiser's stormy and ill-regulated activity was utterly distasteful to him; in addition he cherished a genuine love of peace. He had too much sense to overlook the peril and misery involved in a general war or to face it with a light heart. Again, in justice to the King, let me add that within his limits he really worked for peace. I shall never forget that in February and March, 1913, King Charles was the one convinced champion of my policy, the object of which was to prevent a sanguinary conflict between Bulgaria and ourselves, a conflict which would at that time have inevitably resulted in universal war. It is true that at a certain moment he deserted me, but when I none the less maintained an absolute *non possumus,* the King frankly confessed to me that he would never have given way to the war party if he had not been certain that I would stand my ground. Mon-

archs sometimes make us unexpected confidences. Did not King Charles one day explain to me for a full half-hour the reasons which made him fundamentally ungrateful?

Until 1912 the King had lived in the conviction that the general war would not break out during his lifetime. In the autumn of 1912 he sent his nephew—now King Ferdinand of Roumania—to Berlin to learn the intentions of the Emperor William. The Crown Prince brought back the answer that the Emperor believed a conflict between pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism to be inevitable, but that he hoped it would not take place while he lived. King Carl for his part was so convinced of the stability of peace that he ventured in the spring of 1914 to receive a visit from the Czar at Constanza, which he would never have done had he thought that a few months afterwards he might have to consider the possibility of declaring war on him. Even on July 5, 1914, when King Charles confided to me at Sinaia the Kaiser's great secret—namely, that he had decided to bring about the European war—he added that this would not take place for three or four years. That the old King was quite honest in saying so I am absolutely convinced for a thousand reasons, the

strongest of which, based on his own temperament, is that had King Charles imagined that the world war on which the Kaiser had determined would break out twenty-two days later, he would have begun at once to take steps to ensure that his personal policy should at least have every possible chance of success. In point of fact, he took no such step until the days just preceding the declaration of war. Now during the whole of his reign he had subordinated everything to the single idea of making himself the autocrat of Roumania's foreign policy. He would not have left himself completely unarmed on the day of the crisis had he known beforehand the date on which that crisis would occur.

Before the meeting of the Crown Council on August 3, 1914, King Charles had confined any action on his own part solely to conversations with his Ministers. Of these conversations history will have more to say. The cardinal point, which is within my personal knowledge, is that the King always contended that England would remain neutral. Like nearly all Germans, King Charles was not merely ignorant of England, but totally incapable of understanding her. The Anglo-Saxon world is always surprised that Ger-

mans are as blind as they are where England is concerned: the truth is that, apart from very rare and partial exceptions, the German is organically unable to appreciate the English spirit. England was simply excluded from the old King's calculations, and with the tone of authority which monarchs are accustomed to use, especially on subjects which they know nothing about, he pronounced his opinion as if it were gospel.

King Charles was equally ignorant of the workings of the Italian mind. He could not believe that Italy would dare to detach herself from Germany, and the attitude she actually adopted disconcerted no less than it surprised him. So convinced was he that Italy would not venture to separate herself from her all-powerful allies, that when the Italian Minister came to inform him confidentially of the intentions of his Government, in event of war resulting from the ultimatum to Serbia, and emphasized the fact that he was only authorized to communicate this to the King on the understanding that His Majesty pledged himself to repeat no word of it to anyone, King Charles naïvely asked him if he must keep it a secret even from Berlin. The Minister's answer was that this went without say-

ing, since when the Italian Government wished to make a communication to the German Government, it would take particular care to do so at Berlin and not at Sinaia. It should be added that there was no love lost between these two. The King disliked the Italian Minister and the latter reciprocated his sentiments with interest.

Given these views on England and Italy, together with his profound admiration for the German military organization and the opinions which were so widely entertained in half-informed circles on the military deficiencies of France, it is far from surprising that King Charles allowed himself to be convinced, not only that Germany would win, but that she would do so very rapidly. When one considers his conduct during the Summer and Autumn of 1914, which accorded so ill with the higher interests of the country he had made his own, one must take into account the extenuating circumstances that, with the best will in the world, a Roumanian by adoption could not be conscious of the problem of our national unity in the same sense as a Roumanian by birth, and that the King was more than sincere in his belief that Germany could not be beaten.

When at the Crown Council of August 3, 1914, the King told us that by our refusal to allow him to enter the war at the side of the Central Empires we had destroyed the whole great work of the Roumanian renaissance, that we had ruined our country forever, and that the immediate future would show us how right he was, he was perfectly sincere. He was sure of a German victory, and King Charles was never one of those who can rise to the level of understanding that it is better to be beaten in the defense of right than to follow the call of triumphant wrong.

So little did King Charles believe in the possibility of resisting Germany, that some days after the famous Crown Council he was at pains to inform me exactly how the war would develop. According to him, it was to last, at the most, until December, and in January, if not sooner, the Peace Conference, which would change the organization of the world from top to bottom, would be called together. Before the 15th of September the Emperor William was to be in Paris. Immediately afterwards a revolution would break out in France, and Germany would grant her defeated enemy a peace, generous beyond all expectations, only depriving her of her col-

onies and a mere trifle of territory. Germany, added the King, would never repeat the error of maintaining the French Republic. On the contrary, she would help in the restoration of the monarchy, in the person of Prince Victor Napoleon. Once peace was signed in France, the Emperor would turn with all his force against Russia, and before December would achieve the task, which had been too much for Napoleon, of occupying Moscow and Petrograd. This would be the end of the war, to be followed by the dismemberment of Russia on the lines of the famous scheme dating from Bismarck's time, which, however, it must be remembered, the great Chancellor insisted should only be carried out in concert with England. It is needless to dwell on what I said in reply to this fantastic dream, which from the lips of a man ordinarily so full of common-sense as King Charles, impressed me very strangely. Quite vainly I tried to make him understand that there would be no revolution in France, that there would be no restitution of the monarchy, and that it was incomprehensible that the Napoleons, children of victory, should ever owe the recovery of their throne to a defeat. The King seemed to have been hypnotized. The more he spoke to me

the more conscious I became of that terribly intoxicating quality in the idea of German omnipotence, which could at so great a distance enchain the mind of an old man whose deliberate judgment had always been his master quality.

King Charles had reached such a point of conviction that Germany must win that he quite openly criticized his nephew, King Albert, of whom he was really fond, for what he called his fatal error in opposing the march of the German troops through Belgium. There was something very painful to me in the King's insistence on this subject, and one August day, when he happened to say that the war had not brought to the front a single great man, I replied to him that he was mistaken, for there was already one name inscribed on the page of immortality—that of his nephew, King Albert, of whom he had full cause to be proud. And since the King maintained his point of view that another policy would have been more to Belgium's advantage, I repeated to him the answer I had given the evening before to the German Minister, when he, too, had said the same thing. I had asked the German Minister if he had never sacrificed his interest to his honor. When he

assured me that he would never do anything else, I replied in my turn that nations had the right to consider their personal honor as well as individuals.

On the anniversary of Sedan, or the day before, the Emperor William telegraphed from Rheims to King Charles that he could assure him, after having consulted his military chiefs, that at length France was at his feet. The King had that day the last genuine gratification of his life. Not that he hated France, far from it, and nothing would have pleased him better than an understanding between France and Germany; but he thought he saw his forecast justified. The Sovereign, who had been touched to his innermost being by discovering his inability to impose his will on Roumania, as he had hitherto done throughout his reign, cherished a last hope of at least being able to say to us one day: "You see, I was right." Further, it is by no means certain that he did not hope to revive his policy and see Roumania, after all, at Germany's side when the German victory was established beyond dispute. That this was his hope I myself believe.

Cruel awakening as the battle of the Marne

was for King Charles, he tried to deceive himself on the consequences of that critical event. I saw him a few days after this marvelous victory, which will remain one of the happiest and most significant dates in the annals of mankind. The King told me that what had happened was nothing but a strategic retreat; as always, he clung to the idea that the German army could not be beaten. I could not control myself and, forgetting the respect due to his position and his years, I explained to him, in unrestrained terms, the absurdity of the idea that an army, which had sacrificed everything for the sake of advancing at headlong speed, had determined to lose all the benefit of this forward movement without having been defeated. King Charles—the words dropping slowly from his lips in a fashion which told plainly how his spirit had been overwhelmed by a reality he had never dared to suspect—said to me very gently, "Perhaps, then, I am mistaken; perhaps you are right; perhaps they have been beaten." The more I think of this conversation the more I am conscious of King Charles' moral distress during this last period of his life. I often saw him then, although I never asked for an audi-

ence. It was always the King who, deeply pained as he was by the campaign I was conducting against Germany, sent for me.

At one of these interviews our talk touched on the name of his sister, the Countess of Flanders, mother of King Albert. In a tone of deep despair the old King said to me: "God has been good to her, he has taken her before this terrible day. Up to now the Almighty has been good to me also, but he has deserted me at last. How much better it would have been for me to die before this war." I was deeply touched, and answered him that I perfectly understood him, and that in truth it would have been better for him to have died before war broke out. It was with these melancholy reflections that my last serious interview with King Charles came to an end, and I am convinced that it was the spectacle of the collapse of his fondest beliefs that hastened his end.

He was one more victim of the belief which for every German had become a maxim of life, that Germany was so strong that she was invincible. Before the battle of the Marne he expressed it by saying, "For a century pan-Germanism will be supreme: then will come

the era of the Slav." King Charles believed the day of the Latin world was done, and as for the Anglo-Saxon world, he never even began to understand it.

*Herr Riedl*

# XIV

## HERR RIEDL

DURING the Balkan crisis Roumania found herself in a most painful position. She had let the opportune moment pass for discussing with Bulgaria the pushing of her frontier beyond the Danube. The best moment was before Bulgaria mobilized, or at any rate the few days between the calling-up order and the beginning of the campaign. It was not till after the battle of Lule-Burgas, when a new Government, in which my party held half the portfolios, came into office that overtures with Bulgaria were begun. We know how difficult they were.

Russia did not conceal her intention of helping Bulgaria if it so happened that we attacked her.

The eventuality of Roumania asking for Austrian aid also came into the category of possibilities.

It was at that moment that Austria thought fit to hand us the note prepared in anticipa-

tion of her eventual assistance. She sent a M. Riedl to Bucharest, a gentleman I prefer calling *Herr* Riedl, for rarely have I seen so representative a type of man replete with that particular form of bookish undigested information which is almost a monopoly of the German race.

He filled some very high position in the Viennese bureaucracy, and was the confidential agent of Francis Ferdinand, some said his future Finance Minister. His mind was most dogmatic. It is hardly worth while to add that he knew nothing about human psychology. Germans find it an inaccessible realm.

Herr Riedl's first business was with our Minister of Finance and our Minister of Commerce. I don't know whether our Finance Minister saw through him, but our Minister of Commerce did, and rang me up to tell me Riedl had asked him to conclude a customs union with Austria-Hungary, neither more nor less. He added that Herr Riedl was coming on to see me.

He came, and stayed with me for over an hour. The talk consisted, for the most part, of a monologue. His French was bad, but it did not prevent him from saying what he thought. He became quite lost among his

own theories and statements. He arranged facts to suit himself, instead of basing his theories on existing facts. His dogmatism in no wise precluded his having recourse to cunning. Herr Riedl, in fact, would have made an excellent diplomatist to deal with imbeciles. He would have impressed them by his scientific jargon and he would have taken them in by his appearance of candor.

Herr Riedl began by laying down that Turkey in Europe must be divided amongst the Balkan nations. Therefore Austria, who stood to lose the Turkish market, had a claim to economic compensation, and in dealing with this question of compensation she was anxious to arrive first at an understanding with Roumania. If we made difficulties she would begin with Bulgaria. The blackmail was obvious.

Herr Riedl, who was out to ask for a customs union, was careful not to mention these words. He preferred a preferential tariff.

He explained to me at some length that the system known as the favored nation treatment had had its day, and that in future the world would advance to the tune of the preferential tariff. Austria wished to inaugurate the system, and it consisted in this: Austria, in re-

turn for a certain limited quantity of our food products—the quantity necessary for her own consumption—would allow us preference, and we were to do the same for certain industrial products from Austria, but we were not to be allowed to grant a similar preference to other nations. The system was to be carried into effect when our existing commercial treaties expired, but we were to conclude the agreement immediately.

When I objected that we should thus run the risk of having no other state to trade with us, he recognized that this was quite possible. Austria and Roumania would then have a tariff war with all the rest of the world. And when I said that all it meant was our entry into a customs union with Austria, he was obliged to admit that I was right.

I pointed out to him that his system had not been tried anywhere, and he instanced the preferential tariffs of Canada and South Africa in favor of England. "But they are parts of the British Empire," I said, "and Roumania is a state independent of Austria." He pretended not to understand my objection. At bottom he knew well enough that for us to enter a customs union with Austria would mean the loss of our independence.

Probably he thought that we should be flattered by this prospect.

I proved to him at length why we never could accept his system, and I explained to him that we meant to develop our industries. I told him we wished to control our own tariff system, and that as for our cereals, our wood and our petrol, we could export them everywhere, especially to the west and to Germany, without any preference in the Austrian market. I added that we clung too tightly to our political and economic independence to be tempted by the dole of a little extra profit on our cereals.

Then he let his imagination loose. He told me that the world could no longer continue as it was, that Europe must organize herself against the tyranny of pirate powers and of America.

He divided old Europe into three groups. The first, composed of England and France, were *pirate* states, which lived not by their own production but by exploiting colonies. He developed this nonsense with so much gravity and emphasis that I had greatly difficulty in preventing myself from laughing. The two pirate states ought to be hunted out

of the European market and isolated and left to pine alone.

The second group consisted of Russia, who had no right to remain in Europe. She ought to be hunted into Asia, or at any rate banished beyond Moscow. Russia ought to be cut off from the Baltic and from the Black Sea, and thus reduced, should be left to her proper economic fate.

The rest of Europe was to be organized into a great tariff union, of which the Austro-Roumanian agreement was to be the corner-stone. He said that Austria would take upon herself to get the consent of Germany to his scheme. Once this was done, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium, and Holland, the states of the north and the states cut away from Russia would be compelled to enter this union, and the world would be transformed.

When I objected that Germany had much to lose in such an arrangement, as she risked forfeiting that oversea commerce which played so great a part in her national economy, he replied that it was precisely in order to fight the United States that the new organization of Europe had become necessary. And he let himself go about the American invasion, the American danger, and so on.

He was immensely astonished when I told him that I saw nothing to worry about in the development of America, that it was perfectly natural, and that the hegemony of the white races would pass to the other side of the Atlantic.

"Just think," I said. "The nations over there are not hampered by our military slavery, our prejudices, our monarchies, our aristocracies. For this reason they are greatly superior to us, and it is impossible that they should not get the upper hand."

At that moment I was not able to add the strongest argument of all—the madness of a universal war, which has brought the transfer of this hegemony nearer by half a century.

I think this was the climax for Herr Riedl. He realized that there was nothing to be done with me, and though he still paid calls and pretended to take quite seriously the promises made to him of examining his system carefully, he was under no illusions, and went back to Vienna.

I have never heard of him since.

*Count Szeczen*

# XV

## COUNT SZECZEN

Count Szeczen was the last Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Paris, and we must hope he will remain the last. Whatever survives of the Hapsburg monarchy, if by ill fortune anything does survive, will never be able to afford the luxury of having an ambassador.

There is nothing either good or bad about Count Szeczen which makes him stand out. He is just one of those many Counts out of which the Dual Empire manufactured diplomatists. If he took the trouble to look at my souvenirs he would find out that he was the first Hapsburg diplomat to appear to me under a new and purely Magyar form. Since then I have seen many more of them. But before I met Count Szeczen I had only met what are called "Kaiserlicks" even among the Magyars. My memory of Szeczen is distinct because of that. Even twenty years ago, though he represented the Dual Monarchy and received his instructions from Vienna, he

was Magyar, very Magyar and nothing but Magyar. At the time of which I am speaking he was first secretary of the Legation of Bucharest, under Count Goluchowsky. There was an agitation at the time in our country over the Roumanians in Hungary. The Magyars had made harsher the rule to which they subjected non-Magyar nationalities in their midst, and naturally we were not able to hide the sense of bitterness which Magyar injustice left in our souls. The press was violent and all sorts of demonstrations took place.

Similarly the Austro-Hungarian Government began to take umbrage, and the Roumanian Government, of which I was a member, did not know which way to turn.

I was very intimate with Count Szeczen. We saw each other constantly, and tacitly agreed never to touch on the question of the Roumanians in Hungary. This often was awkward, but we pretended not to be aware of it. Our intimacy was only possible on these terms.

One day Count Szeczen broke the silence. An incident had occurred which was of no particular gravity, but it was something Count Szeczen could not swallow. I think a Hun-

garian flag had been torn up. He had just had luncheon with me, and he made up his mind to speak to me as soon as we were alone together in my study. He began bitterly by imputing motives of tolerance or complicity to our Government, as we had not taken action against the demonstrators, and, warming up, he said word for word almost as follows: "You are now playing a dangerous game. You accept the axiom that we can never come to an understanding with Russia and you count on a future war between us and the Russians. Well, you are mistaken. If the time ever comes that we are convinced that we cannot count on you as the loyal ally of the Magyar Union, the only state which concerns us and one which we would defend with the last drop of our blood, we shall come to an understanding with Russia. After all, the Carpathians make a first-rate frontier, and Galicia, Roumania, Constantinople even, are as nothing when it is a question of preserving to Hungary its character as a Magyar Union. Believe me, nothing is more possible than a definite and permanent understanding between Magyars and Russians. We shall be on one slope of the Carpathians, looking towards the Adriatic, they will be on the other slope, fac-

ing towards the Black Sea. And that will be the end for ever of the Roumanian question, not only in Hungary but everywhere."

I let Count Szeczen unfold his scheme. He was furious, and paid no heed to the fact that it was very strange that an Austro-Hungarian diplomat should speak in this way to a Roumanian Minister.

When I replied that I had never had any doubt about the hostility of Magyar feeling towards us, but that all the same his threats had no effect on me, as I did not believe in the possibility of a Russo-Magyar alliance, he saw his mistake and stammered out an excuse that was no excuse. As we neither of us had any wish to quarrel we let the discussion drop.

That day Szeczen had revealed to me the depths of his Magyar soul. This proud predatory people will never become resigned to live its own life as a national state like England, France, Spain or Italy. They mean to dominate other nationalities or perish. Any other solution is impossible.

Count Karolyi's policy cannot be explained in any other way. It is identical with that with which Count Szeczen in an angry moment threatened me more than twenty years ago. Often what appears to be new is really old.

*Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace*

## XVI

### SIR DONALD MACKENZIE WALLACE

MANY, many years ago, during the last period of the reign of the great Queen Victoria, Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace was my guest at Sinaia. Sir Donald was very well known in England. He began life in diplomacy, directed the foreign policy of the *Times* for a very long period, was Lord Dufferin's right-hand man in India, and was extremely intimate up till the day of his death with King Edward, then Prince of Wales. Sir Donald wrote a classic on Russia, a book which has been translated into all languages. He was chosen by King Edward to accompany King George, then Prince of Wales, in his tour around the Empire, and he wrote an account of the trip. He attended the peace conferences of Portsmouth and Algeciras; and at Petrograd he was the guest of Sir Arthur Nicholson when the Anglo-Russian alliance was concluded.

I have had many interesting interviews with Sir Donald during my life. The one I am

about to relate is of extraordinary importance.

We were walking in a splendid forest, and our conversation naturally turned to world politics. Sir Donald said:

"The present policy of the European Powers is absurd. We are all victims of the prejudices of the elder statesmen who perpetuate the truths of their youth which no longer correspond with actuality. For example, in England we are dominated by two so-called axioms, both equally out of date. We live in dread of the bogey of Russia wishing to chase us out of India, and we believe ourselves the eternal rival of France. Now all that is untrue—utterly untrue. There is enough room on Asia for England as well as Russia, perhaps we already take up more room there than the Asiatics approve of. Anglo-French rivalry is a prehistoric peep dating from the epoch when there were only two great powers in the world, France and England. To-day it means nothing whatever. England always has been and always must be an essentially pacific power, essentially conservative so far as international politics are concerned. France, for a thousand reasons, is now an equally pacific and conservative power. The

only revolutionary power in international politics is Germany. It is Germany who keeps the world on the alert, it is Germany alone who threatens its peace. You may expect to see great changes when the elder statesmen have given way to another generation. You will see England become France's greatest friend, and the famous antagonism between England and Russia relegated to a museum of antiquities."

When Sir Donald predicted this, speaking so succinctly and frankly, it was a new point of view. But since then it has all happened.

That evening we spoke of Roumania, of her people, of her future. Sir Donald had studied the question of the Roumanians in Hungary in detail. He had even been to Brashov, Sibiu and Blaj, the districts chiefly concerned, and had talked to the representative Roumanians living there.

Suddenly he asked me the great question:

"You have a treaty of alliance with Austria —you needn't deny it, I know it. But do you think that when the moment comes for you to put it into effect you will be able to do it? Personally I cannot see how you can."

"I do not know whether we have a treaty of alliance with Austria or not," I replied, for I

was bound to absolute secrecy. "If it exists I agree with you no one in the world would carry it into effect."

Sir Donald must have made a mental note of my statement, which was as clear as his own.

Circumstances have shown that I, in my turn, was a true prophet.

*Baron Banffy*

# XVII

## BARON BANFFY

I saw Baron Banffy, the most overbearing of all Hungarian ministers (and that is saying a good deal), but once. It was in the first days of January, 1896. Banffy was a big cheery fellow with pointed mustaches, who looked like a Magyarized edition of a typical French official.

He was a second rate man, but in spite of this his extreme energy imposed on people even when he was expressing himself in a language he spoke badly. Banffy came from Transylvania, and could speak Roumanian. As a *préfét* (for he had begun by being a *préfét*) he had served a good apprenticeship in working the political oracle among the electorate, first as a district official and later on as Prime Minister of Hungary.

When I was in Vienna in January, 1896, he intimated his wish to make my acquaintance through a Hungarian deputy of the Independent Party. The reason that the Hungarian Premier wanted to see me was not far to seek.

It was merely curiosity. It was because I was the first Roumanian Minister to give subsidies, secret subsidies, not only to the Roumanian schools and churches of Transylvania, but also to newspapers and political committees. In order to subsidize the papers I commissioned journalists to write class books ostensibly for use in the Roumanian schools of Macedonia, and I paid for the work right royally. I need hardly explain that the class books were not always written.

Banffy after a while had scented something of this political activity, of which, as a matter of fact, my colleagues in the Cabinet, with the exception of the Prime Minister, Lascar Catargi, were unaware, and I only told him after having done it for two and a half years. He did not blame me, but my political opponents in Roumania denounced my activities, and it was in this way that Banffy came to be certain of what I was up to. As I had been turned out of office in October, 1895, Banffy was anxious to see the enemy of his people at close quarters.

After leaving Vienna I stayed at Budapesth, and asked for an audience from the Hungarian Prime Minister. He received me in the wonderful Royal Palace of Bude, from

which one gets such a glorious view over the Danube and over Pesth. Banffy quite naturally spoke to me on the subject of the Roumanians in Hungary.

He began rather brusquely by saying, "I hope you are not going to tell me that you don't want to annex Transylvania." "No," I replied, "I shall not tell you that; if I did you would not believe it, and would only think that you were dealing with a liar or with a man who does not love his country. I want to annex Transylvania, but I can't do it."

And then in my turn I said to him, "I hope you are not going to tell me that you don't wish to move the frontiers of the Magyar state to the Black Sea." With real good temper Banffy replied, "No, I won't tell you that. I do want to move Hungary's frontier to the Black Sea, but I can't do it."

Then I said, "As the historical case between us cannot be settled either in your favor or in mine, and since we are neighbors, is it not possible for us to find a *modus vivendi?* You have made the conditions for Roumanians in Hungary intolerable, why don't you change them?"

Banffy began a series of explanations, one falser than the other, in order to prove that

there had been no oppression. And by way of something final he asked me why Roumanians in Hungary would not take part in elections and would not come to the Parliament at Budapesth to put forward their grievances. I must explain that at this period the Roumanians of Hungary had adopted the policy of passive resistance, which included abstention from the farce known in Hungary as elections. I looked Baron Bantfy straight between the eyes, knowing that I was dealing with a vain man from whom one might obtain anything by flattering his vanity. "Look here, Baron Bantfy," I said, "we both know what elections are in our respective countries. Can you tell me perfectly truthfully that if Roumanians were to offer themselves for election and you did not wish them to be elected there would be a single one who could be returned against your will?" Bantfy answered, "Not a single one if I did not wish it." Thus I got him to discard his little joke about Roumanians participating in elections, a proceeding devoid of all sense unless Roumanians and Magyars were to come to a mutual understanding. Then going back to the idea of a *modus vivendi*, I said, "I have no mandate for the Roumanians of Hungary, I am not

speaking in their name, but would it be impossible for you to come to an agreement similar to that you have made with the Saxons in Transylvania and in this way protect their churches, their schools and certain electoral divisions?"

Banffy answered with the most brutal frankness: "As for that, never. The Saxons in Transylvania are but 230,000 in number and they are more than 700 miles from the Germans of Germany, whereas the Roumanians in Hungary are three and a half millions strong and are geographically contiguous to the Roumanians of Roumania. *It can never be.*"

We continued to discuss the matter. I asked him whether it would not at least be possible to give Transylvania the same electoral franchise as Hungary, and the secret ballot.

"Never," answered Banffy once again.

He rang and ordered the electoral map of the Kingdom of Hungary to be brought in.

"Look at this map," he said; "the purely Magyar areas of Hungary return 'Kossuthist' deputies, that is to say partisans of a rupture with Austria, which would be the end of Magyar domination. My Government, like

the governments that have gone before and those which will follow after, only exists because of the division amongst nationalities. With the secret ballot we should lose this advantage; in short, we could no longer govern."

After an hour of useless talk Banffy asked me if there was a single point on which we agreed.

"Yes," I said, "we are agreed that we never can agree on any point."

When I rose to bid him farewell we walked past the window with the view over the Danube and over Pesth. "What a magnificent capital you have there," I remarked. "Well, come and take it," gaily answered Banffy.

"Even if I could, I never would take it; but its occupation is quite another matter," said I.

Most of this conversation with Baron Banffy has already appeared in the pages of Sir Mount Stuart Grant Duff's diary. I had told him about it in London some years after it happened.

Never have I had so clear and categorical an explanation from any Hungarian statesman of the irremediable antagonism of our two points of view.

# XVIII

## ROUMANIAN POLICY

In 1908 I was dining at the house of a great friend in Paris. There were a number of people there, amongst them two former French Foreign Ministers. If they read this they will remember the conversation I am about to relate.

One of them, whom we will call X, was a widely erudite man and a writer of great talent, but the sort of nature which does not retain its impressions. The other, Y, was concentrated by nature and spoke little and seldom.

After dinner, when most of the guests had gone off to listen to music, we three found ourselves alone in the study.

We talked of Roumania, which had just made an act of unnecessary submission to Austria, and X suddenly exclaimed:

"The more I think about it, the less I understand the policy of Roumania. You have no chance of becoming a great nation except at

Hungary's expense. Yet you are the allies of Hungary; for make no mistake, Austria no longer exists. In reality you are in the first place allies of Hungary, and in the second place allies of Germany. It is impossible for me to understand your policy."

"Do you understand the policy of Italy?" I asked.

"Of course," X replied, "it is the policy of fear."

"And why do you think that Italy is the only country that is afraid?"

Y, who had said nothing, began to speak. He recognized that the policy of Roumania was to be explained by fear, and the conversation turned on the profound difference between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. In the Triple Alliance, or rather the Austro-German alliance, there was complete unity of control, as Berlin alone was in command; in the Triple Entente the bonds were so intangible that it was difficult at the moment to rely on them.

"What can we do," asked X, "in order to show you the great interest we take in your happenings and in your future?"

Y then said, "All we can do for Roumania is to help her to become strong, so that when

the day of the great catastrophe arrives and she has to make her choice, she may choose with perfect freedom."

I thanked these two ex-ministers, and told them that in spite of the apparent political slavery of Roumania and in spite of the diplomatic folly she had just perpetrated, a folly that consisted in informing Sofia that she would be obliged to intervene if Bulgaria took advantage of troubles in Constantinople to attack Turkey—in spite of these things I promised that Roumania's choice would be made in perfect freedom.

My friends must now see I was right, and they cannot regret the support given us by France in 1913.

*Tragedy*

# XIX

## TRAGEDY

THE scene was London, on the 27th of July, 1914.

In spite of the pacific assurances which had in all good faith been given me that morning by Prince Lichnowsky, who had been studiously kept in ignorance of the warlike designs of the Emperor, I saw the world war approaching and I was gripped by the horror of it. The last chance of salvation lay in adopting the English proposal for a conference of the four Great Powers, but that had come to nothing, owing to Germany's refusal to take any part in it.

Although I was convinced that no one would ever make the Roumanian army fight side by side with Hungarian troops, yet I was anxious, for I could not foresee how the war would open, or be certain that Germany and Austria would not, by some diabolic stroke of ingenuity, arrange things in such a way as to force Russia to declare war herself.

Not having the text of our treaty of alliance under my eyes, I could not be sure that we could escape its entanglements without appearing to violate the letter of our engagement. In particular I could not recall exactly how the key phrase, "without provocation on her part," was worded.

In the afternoon I asked my old friend, the Italian Ambassador in London, the Marquis Imperiali, to come and see me. Having played an important part in affairs in his own country, I felt sure he would know the text of the Italian treaty, the provisions of which were identical with those of the Roumanian treaty which I had read through in June, 1908.

We talked together for a long while over the grave peril that threatened European civilization. We hoped against all hope. We even imagined we had discovered catchwords which would make the war impossible, so monstrous did it all seem to us.

But we did more than this, for we also discussed the war as a real possibility. It did not take us long to find out, firstly, that we were completely agreed that if war did break out the blame would be entirely with Germany and the Magyars, and secondly, that the fate

of the world for generations to come must depend on the result of the war.

We both were clearly of opinion that in the event of a German victory the future of Roumania as well as Italy would be seriously compromised, if not destroyed. Supposing Germany and Austria to be the victors, all the *risorgimento*, all the battles and sacrifices of the Italian people would be in vain. For Roumania a German victory meant even more than this, it meant sudden death, while Italy at the worst might accustom herself to slow strangulation.

We believed in the wisdom of our respective Governments, and we also felt certain that if our rulers attempted to force our people to fight side by side with the enemies of all liberal civilization, our people would resist. All the same we asked ourselves, in our wretchedness, whether by the literal interpretation of treaties we were obliged to acquiesce in race-suicide.

The Marquis Imperiali had read the treaty —as a matter of fact he had done so before I did—and we tried together to reconstitute the text, but we could not do it. I shall never forget our despair, our misery, at not being able to say with certainty what the exact word-

ing of the treaty really was. Yet on the *letter* of the treaty — for, remember, we had not yet become acquainted with the "scrap of paper" doctrine — depended our honor and our future.

"What a tragedy!" we said to each other.

We both felt tears trickling down our faces, and we were not ashamed of them; but our talk came to an end; and with a prolonged hand-grip we said farewell.

I have never seen the Marquis Imperiali since that day, but when he reads this he will forgive me for having preserved the memory of his tears. We wept together.

*Count Tisza*

# XX

## COUNT TISZA

In the great war Count Tisza was the strongest statesman the Central Powers had. He was the prime mover in unchaining the conflict. Tisza provoked the universal carnage, but without the backing of Berlin he would not have dared to do it, and therefore the real criminal must be looked for in Berlin. He ran the war with an energy worthy of a better cause, and paid for his crime with his life. The punishment has been carried out, so the case for the prosecution is closed.

I only met Tisza once, twenty years ago. He was then chairman of the board of a Budapesth bank which did business with an industrial company in Roumania of which I was chairman. We talked business and travel, not a word of politics. But this short conversation sufficed to give me an idea of his personality. He was strong in every sense of the word. Cold as the blade of a knife; with a will of extreme brutality, and a demeanor

as serious as an English non-conformist minister's.

Though he was a strong man he could never be a popular one. He had no magnetism, no emotional quality, no outward sign of the divine fire, none of the things that enable a public man to influence a crowd.

I have often wondered how it was possible for so strong a man to blunder so badly. He committed the unspeakable crime of provoking a war that would end Magyar domination, which, in Tisza's eyes, was synonymous with Magyar patriotism. There evidently must have been several reasons why Tisza made such a mistake, but Magyar megalomania is not the least of them.

The recollection of my solitary conversation with Tisza helps me, however, to understand this psychological problem.

The intellectual isolation in which Tisza lived may have had something to say to it, too, for it prevented him from realizing what was happening in other countries. In talking with him I asked him whether it was long since he had visited the west of Europe. He answered me that it was seven years since he had left Austria-Hungary and that he felt no need ever to leave it again.

"I should die if I went in for the same *régime*," I said. "I leave Roumania three times a year and pass four months in Western Europe, and look upon these journeys as a necessity—a sort of intellectual hygiene.

"If we stay at home too long our horizon contracts. Little local questions assume an importance which they do not really possess. One must treat events in the political world as one does Mont Blanc; if one wishes to appreciate its size, one must go away from it. I have to cross the frontier in order to understand how small are the questions which at Bucharest seem to me of the first magnitude."

Tisza listened to me, but did not understand. He was satisfied with knowing the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and more especially the Kingdom of Hungary, and from that standpoint to judge the course of human events.

This political myopia must have blinded the strongest man the Central Empires possessed and led him to unloose a war in which were to founder the hegemony of his race, the interests of his caste and his own historical reputation.

One must at any rate do this much justice

to Tisza. He made his exit from the scene better than the two Emperors who had banded themselves together against the liberty of the world.

*Talaat Pasha*

# XXI

## TALAAT PASHA

Talaat Pasha was the strongest man of the Young Turk Party. Djavid was better informed, Djemal more cultured, Enver made more noise, but Talaat, without doubt, had more strength of character. He was a Turk, but a Turk trying to be a modern man without, however, imitating the externals of a European. He was uneducated; had read hardly anything, had traveled very little, and knew none of those things which are a common bond among public men in Western countries. Talaat made up for all these deficiencies by a will of iron, indomitable courage, and by a quality which is unusual among Turks, a quickness of decision and a firmness in execution which had nothing Oriental about them.

Like all the Young Turks, Talaat was a Jingo. When I saw him for the second time on my return from Athens in November, 1913, where I had assisted in the conclusion

of peace between Turkey and Greece. Talaat explained to me how he had plotted and brought about the recapture of Adrianople in 1913. It was a wonderful example of rashness and of resolution. In twenty-four hours he had forced his will upon the Cabinet, the Generals and the Great Powers, in order to procure the necessary money to carry out an expedition which the Bulgarians could easily have turned into a disaster for the Turks had they wished to do so. On the eve of this *coup* Talaat had found few people to approve of it, on the morrow everyone was his accomplice. "As to the Great Powers," said he to me, "I knew that they would not move, and that the very audacity of the thing would force it on them. I shall soon do the same thing when I suppress the capitulations. We do not mean to have those capitulations any more. I know quite well that Europe will protest, but she will not *act*." He showed the same determination in discussing the Sultan. I had asked him if the Sultan or the heir-apparent might not wish to recover the powers of former sovereigns. "We will never allow him to," replied Talaat. "We are the masters, and if a Sultan thinks he is going to run things as he pleases we shall simply depose him."

These qualities of Talaat's were spoilt by a spirit of party prejudice, which we in the west find some difficulty in realizing. For example, when after my return from Athens I was discussing with Talaat a proposal for an understanding between Turkey and Greece about which Venizelos had charged me to sound the Turks, I felt that party interests more than anything else lay behind the arguments which Talaat used to me in countering my proposal. Talaat would have liked to raise the popularity of the Young Turk Party by striking at a neighbor, and his Greek neighbor seemed to him the easiest to hit without incurring too big a risk.

When I saw Talaat for the first time he impressed me by his thoroughly un-Turkish characteristics. Early in November, 1913, I went from Sinaia to Athens under the pretext of a pleasure trip, but in reality to try to induce Turkey to make peace with Greece. Turkey was being encouraged in her attitude by Bulgaria, and thought of nothing less than restarting the Balkan war. My friend Venizelos was of opinion that my going there might perhaps cause the Turks to pause in their insane project.

I said nothing about my intentions to any-

one in Roumania except King Charles, with whom I arranged that if I succeeded the credit of it should go to Roumania, but that if I failed the blame should be mine for having undertaken a mission which no one had charged me with.

I asked an old friend, a Roumanian of Macedonia, formerly in the Young Turk Government, Batzaria by name, to meet me at Constantinople, where I only intended stopping a couple of hours. I wanted him to tell his friend Talaat, whom I did not at that time know, what a dangerous game the Turks and Bulgarians were playing, and how determined Roumania was not to tolerate a new conflagration in the Balkans. To my great surprise Talaat himself turned up. He made a good impression on me. We talked for more than an hour. He complained that my going to Athens at such a moment looked like a demonstration against Turkey. I replied that I certainly intended to demonstrate in favor of peace and against Turkey if she allowed herself to be worked up by Bulgar intrigues, and added that Roumania was determined to strike at anybody, no matter whom, who disturbed the peace of Bucharest, and that she was quite in a position to do so.

Talaat was much moved, and we at length reached a point at which he requested me to act as arbitrator between the Turks and the Greeks on all the questions which divided them and they were very numerous questions which had brought about a complete deadlock in the negotiations at Athens. I accepted the mission, and, as is well known, I succeeded. But at this interview I said to Talaat that he must prove to me that he represented something different from the old Turkey, and must do so by undertaking to push the affair through in three days. He agreed to this stipulation, an almost unheard-of proceeding for a Turk, and as a matter of fact everything was put through in Athens in six days, though not without difficulties and worries which need not be detailed now.

Talaat promised to return the visit which I had paid to him on my way back from Athens, and came to Bucharest in the Spring of 1914, when I was no longer a member of the Government. He made the same impression on me, of being a determined man, energetic and brave, but completely ignorant of European men and affairs.

The last time I saw him was at Sinaia, and

I then realized that his blindness must in the long run prove fatal to Turkey.

It is well known that in spite of the peace which I had succeeded in negotiating at Athens the question of the islands remained to be settled between Turkey and Greece. This matter was not by its nature a question for Roumanian arbitration, but for settlement by the Great Powers.

In the early days of the great European war, when I was still at my villa in Sinaia, I learned that Talaat, accompanied by Hakki, then president of the Turkish Chamber of Deputies, had arranged a meeting in Roumania with the Greek delegates, Messrs. Zaimis and Politis, to discuss the question of the islands.

On the way the Turkish delegates stopped two or three days at Sofia, which was a clear indication of their intentions; the so-called negotiations being but a trap laid by Austria and Germany. The discussions were carried on at Bucharest, but the Turkish delegates, under pretext of seeking country air, established themselves at Sinaia. The truth is that they wished to be in close touch with the German, Bulgarian and Austrian Ministers who were then at Sinaia.

The negotiations did not progress; they were not meant to. The only thing the Turks wanted was to find a *casus belli* against Greece, the sooner to bring about the conflagration in the whole Balkan Peninsula.

Talaat naïvely believed that King Charles, who against his will had acquiesced in the neutrality of Roumania, might still drag the country into a war against Russia by allying himself with Bulgaria and Turkey. It was ridiculous, but although Talaat had plenty of determination he was quite ignorant of men and things.

One incident in these precious negotiations is worthy of being noted. It is, moreover, the first and last occasion on which I had a really serious talk with Talaat.

One evening I was in the Casino at Sinaia, having a talk with the Russian and Italian Ministers. It was about ten o'clock at night, when one of my journalist friends came to warn me that the next day the Turkish delegates intended to present an ultimatum to the Greek delegates at Bucharest, and finish off the proceedings by a declaration of war.

The very idea that the Turks, egged on by the Central Powers and by the Bulgarians, were about to let loose a fresh Balkan war

from Bucharest on the hospitable soil of Roumania was hateful to me. At once I cast about for means to prevent such a calamity happening. I knew that Talaat and his colleagues were certain to come into the gambling room, as they were not due to go to Bucharest until the next morning at eight o'clock, and as a matter of fact they turned up soon after eleven o'clock. I at once spoke to Talaat, and told him that I must have a word with him. He tried to put me off by making an appointment for the following evening, after his return from Bucharest, to which I replied that that would be too late, that I must speak to him immediately; that the business was one of extreme urgency, and that the least he could do was to accede to my request.

Much against his will Talaat consented, and asked me whether Hakki could also take part in our conversation. Firmly I replied "No," but said that if he wished to communicate what I said to Hakki that was his own business, but that so far as I was concerned I meant to speak to him alone.

Leading Talaat off into a corner, I made him sit down facing me, and the following strange conversation began.

The general public which crowded round

the baccarat tables paid no attention to us, but the Russian and Italian Ministers, who knew what I was about, kept their eyes fixed on our little group.

In a sharp voice I told Talaat that I knew of his plan for the morrow, and that I asked him, in the name of the respect which he owed to Roumanian hospitality, to give it up.

Talaat tried to stammer out that I was mistaken as to his intentions and so on.

I replied that he was wrong to deny it, as I knew everything, whereupon Talaat acknowledged his scheme, and added that he was convinced that sooner or later Roumania would go to war against Russia side by side with Turkey and Bulgaria.

Thoroughly angry, I asked him whether he had warned the King of his scheme to provoke war while a guest on Roumanian soil. He admitted that he had not done so, but stated that he knew that the King remained favorable to the policy of war in alliance with the Austro-Germans. I then pressed Talaat as hard as I could. Carried away by my feelings, I gesticulated in a way I never do, and so completely forgot the consideration due to a guest that I told him that Roumania would never forget the insult which the Turkish

delegates were about to offer her by thus abusing Roumanian hospitality.

"You shall not do it in Roumania. I give you a fair warning, and believe me that in doing so I speak for all Roumania. If you do it you will repent of it."

I pressed Talaat so hard that he ended by giving me his word of honor that he would not present an ultimatum to Greece next day at Bucharest. I suggested to him to propose an adjournment of the question *sine die*.

"All right," said he, "provided the Greeks don't provoke me to-morrow."

Once I got Talaat's promise to give up his plan I added, "I have given you a warning and you have frankly heeded me. Now I wish to give you a piece of information and a piece of advice. The piece of information is this: owing to the ambiguous language of certain personages you may perhaps have deluded yourself into thinking that circumstances might arise in which Roumania may find herself at war against the Powers of the Entente. Well, believe me, that will never happen, and nobody in the world—understand me clearly, *nobody* in the world—is strong enough to drag Roumania into a war against the Powers of the Entente. The exact opposite is not only

possible but is more than probable. I give you this piece of information so that you may not deceive yourself in weighing the probabilities which will decide the policy of your country."

As Talaat still seemed to doubt whether I was speaking from facts, and as he still questioned me as to the will of the King, I reiterated my point again, and said to him, "*No one, absolutely no one*, is strong enough to prevent Roumania following the policy dictated by her national instinct."

"And now for the piece of advice," I said to him. "Providence has not entrusted me with the task of looking after the fate of Turkey; it is quite enough for me to worry about that of my own country; but I will give you one piece of advice as a true friend. Remain neutral. Never has Turkey had a better chance of living, if she has any vitality in her, than by remaining neutral in this war. In return for your neutrality demand of the Entente the guarantee of your independence, demand the abolition of the capitulations. You will get everything, but war can bring you nothing. If you are beaten, and you will be beaten, you disappear. If you are victorious you will get nothing. A victorious Germany, even if such a thing is possible, will

never commit the folly you dream of, of giving you the Caucasus or Egypt. She would take them for herself if she could; but once more this is merely advice, and the day will come when you will see whether it came from a friend or not."

The next day at Bucharest Talaat kept his word.

I warned the Greeks by a letter sent to them that very night by special messenger, and the conference was adjourned for good.

Since those days I have never seen Talaat. At the time of the English expedition to Gallipoli I wrote to him and asked him to make peace with the Entente, telling him that it was the last chance of salvation for Turkey. Talaat sent me a verbal reply to this letter in the Spring of 1916 by the Roumanian Minister at Constantinople, saying that events had proved that he was right and that I was wrong.

But how do things stand to-day?

*Prince Von Bülow*

# XXII

## PRINCE VON BÜLOW

I HAVE known many of the men who have played an important part in German policy. Only three of them gave me the impression that I had to do with really strong men. Two are dead, Kiderlen-Waechter and Baron Marschall. The third was Prince von Bülow.[1]

So far from being a man of the past, like the Goluchowskys and the Berchtolds, Prince von Bülow is at this moment a man of to-day. Everything about him is therefore of interest. He has a remarkable mind, one of those minds which bring a man to the front in all countries and in all ages. Of course he thinks like a German, like a reactionary, and like a country gentleman; but in spite of these drawbacks his mind is of the most brilliant quality. He possesses remarkable clearness of vision, ability

[1] If the Germans had been wise they would have made Prince von Bulow their representative at the Peace Congress. He was the only man fit to have been intrusted with the part of representing his country in defeat, which Talleyrand played so well a century ago, and which M. Thiers sustained in 1871.

to appreciate situations, adroitness and understanding. It is impossible to be in his company without feeling that he is a man whose family position has merely been an accessory to a distinguished career.

To say that Prince von Bülow is a great man would be an exaggeration, and I believe that he has sufficient sense not to claim anything of the kind. He is even below the level of Kiderlen, merely to instance another German, but he is a strong man, thoroughly able to understand things and to find the best solution of a given problem. In the intellectual desert of German public life that alone is a great quality.

Prince von Bülow is, also, a man of great personal charm, which is always to the good, and his conversation is most entertaining. Although one must not expect Bismarckian aphorisms to fall from his lips, yet his conversation is not tainted by any touch of brutality, roughness or arrogance.

At first sight one can almost believe oneself to be dealing with a Latin, so flexible, so insinuatingly frank and almost caressing is his manner of talking, and though it would be wrong to be taken in by appearance, the charm is undeniable.

The first time I had a serious political talk with Prince von Bülow was towards the end of the year 1888. In April he had been appointed Minister at Bucharest, and was to have remained there until December, 1893. He came from Petrograd, and was seemingly thoroughly conversant with Russian affairs, and he told me that he had spent the last few weeks in the Russian capital studying the Roumanian question in the archives of the German Embassy. His studies had given him, he said, great confidence in the virtues and ability of the Roumanian people, for whom he foresaw a great future.

No doubt this was a very good way of beginning a conversation with me on the problems of European policy, in so far as they affected Roumania and the Roumanian people, for, unlike the late Kiderlen, Prince von Bülow recognized the existence of the nationality question.

In this long conversation, which touched on all subjects and consequently on our own public men, we came to talk about Cogalniceano, who was not only one of our most shining lights, but what is more important, a really great man.

Bülow did not understand why Cogalniceano

was inimical to the policy of an Austro-German alliance. He was too intelligent to attribute mean motives to Cogalniceano, for he knew his patriotism, his great soul, and his high capacity. He was astonished, however, that he seemed to take no account of the Russian danger for Roumania or see that our salvation lay in an alliance with Germany, who could protect us. I answered Prince von Bülow by repeating to him as well as I could all the arguments which Cogalniceano had used so many times to me against the policy of an alliance with Austria and Germany, and this in spite of the genuine admiration which he had at that time for Germany.

After I had repeated these arguments to Prince von Bülow he made a statement which I now record.

Amongst other things, Cogalniceano had said to me, "This Austro-German policy is perfectly absurd, because it is based on the idea of a war between Russia and Germany. Now, such a war will never take place, it would be too much against the traditions of the House of Prussia and too much against the interests of Germany." In 1888 this reasoning seemed faultless. "He is wrong," interrupted Prince von Bülow. "Under the last

reign M. Cogalniccano would have been right, but I am anxious to make you realize that the new reign will show a complete change of front. It will be one of the cardinal points of the policy of the new reign [William II had been on the throne since June, 1888] to be on guard against Russia. You will soon see that our policy will not leave room for doubt as to this question."

Then the talk switched off to other subjects, as invariably happens in the case of conversation without any definite objective.

Later on, when I saw the new Emperor go in for a pro-Polish policy, I understood that Prince von Bülow had not been mistaken. It did not last long, but what could last long in the case of an absolute Monarch who is strong enough to wish to guide everything and not strong enough to be able to do so? Anyway the fact stands that this first talk of mine with Prince von Bülow (and I have had many others since then) remains deeply engraved in my memory. It explained to me many things which have happened during the last twenty-eight years.

Dr. Dillon, the very distinguished writer, has lately published in an English review a most interesting account of Prince von

Bülow's intrigues for the entanglement of Italy, contrary to the dictates of her honor and her national will, in the war.

This article has been republished in the Roumanian papers, and has given its readers a welcome opportunity of getting a good idea of German methods in neutral countries. It is the first instance in modern history in which a foreign power has mixed itself up in the internal affairs of another country on so great a scale; has bought political honor like merchandise in the market place, and has framed real plots against a foreign state and its sovereign will.

When one reads it all one shivers at the idea of what the fate of Europe, the fate of humanity would have been if the Nero of Berlin had been the conqueror in this war. Fortunately it is now no more than a bad dream.

One regrets that Prince von Bülow ever thought it his duty to be mixed up in so unsavory a business. Even patriotism cannot excuse everything. Civilization also has its rights, though modern Germany repudiates this idea; for her doctrine is that German interests are superior to right, honor, decency and humanity, and if we hold the same ideas on these questions as Germany, how can we

explain the sacred indignation which burns in every breast?

Von Bülow deserved a better fate. He had shown himself one of the most brilliant men of present-day Germany, and, in spite of his book, remained in comparison with his contemporaries on a pedestal.

Prince von Bülow had one great merit in the eyes of those who think, for he was the first German Minister who dared to put the Kaiser in his place. In an autocratic country where Parliament is nothing, where the First Minister of the Crown is chosen by the Sovereign, and is responsible only to the Sovereign and can be dismissed by the Sovereign without it being possible for the nation—as in the case of Venizelos—to compel his return; in a country whose political organization was out of date by several centuries, the courage of this act was astonishing. Prince von Bülow's celebrated speech was received with a general pæan of admiration. In the course of that ovation, with masterly skill he taunted his Sovereign with useless speechifying, and undertook in the presence of a phantom parliament that the Monarch should not repeat his mistake. It was a first step, a modest step, it is true, but the first step to-

wards popular government in Germany. This criticism of the Emperor in the Reichstag was the dawn of a revolution, a revolution designed to save Germany and the world from the absurd *régime* which could only result in the horrors of the great war.

And why was the attempt not followed up? Why did it fail?

Perhaps Prince von Bülow never formed a clear estimate of the enormity of his daring. Who knows whether he was not even alarmed by it himself? It is difficult for the soul of the free man to emerge from generations who have indulged in the fetish worship of monarchy.

What is certain is that the Kaiser watched von Bülow like a cat on the pounce to take his revenge. The day the Chancellor committed the mistake of making up to our Nero in the hope that he would forget this salutary though distasteful reprimand, William realized that von Bülow was no Cromwell, not even a Bismarck, and he decided to make him undergo the fate of Seneca, though in a modern fashion. In the same Reichstag in which von Bülow had allowed himself to speak on one occasion as if to an assembly of free men, the Emperor raised against him a reactionary

intrigue, and he fell. The rest of the story is well known. Prince von Bülow retired with a great deal of dignity and without sulking.

He divided his time between Norderney and Rome. From the Eternal City he watched with a fine sense of irony the performances of his former master, whose inevitable collapse he foresaw might take place any day.

When the collapse came Nero recalled Seneca and demanded of him the supreme sacrifice, a harikari, not of his body, but of his reputation and of his name in history.

Prince von Bülow must be congratulated that his patriotism got the better of a very proper feeling of resentment. He was bound to know that he was going to certain defeat, and he knew Italy too well to deceive himself either as to her intelligence or her sense of honor. For that he deserves the commiseration of all mankind. But he lost his head. He was not made of fine enough stuff for the sacrifice, and he ended by believing success to be possible, and then stooped to the task which Dr. Dillon has described, a task which has robbed our modern Seneca of all claim to a martyr's halo.

What a pity for him, and what a triumph for Nero!

*Taticheff*

## XXIII

### TATICHEFF

Tatcheff is no longer a well known name in the world of European politics, and yet he was one of the most genuinely intelligent people it has ever been my lot to meet. I had a talk with him twice, both times in London.

The first time was at a dinner at the St. James Club. Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace, then foreign editor of the *Times*, and Lord Reay, a former governor of Bombay, a man well known in the world of international jurisprudence, were also present.

The second time was at Tatcheff's house, and I talked for a few minutes to Stead, the well-known publicist, who was to lose his life later on in the *Titanic* disaster. At the moment Tatcheff was the late Witte's agent in England. Everyone will remember Witte, the great Finance Minister of the Russian Empire, who as an adjunct to his dictatorship had financial representatives in all the capitals

in Europe, which in reality formed a second diplomatic body, controlled by himself alone.

Tatiheff had a very singular history. He had begun life brilliantly in diplomacy. Appointed to the Embassy at Vienna, he began to work in an anti-German sense, or to say the least of it, not in a pro-German sense. At that time it was a most dangerous game to play, and Bismarck, who never overlooked anything and whose influence in governing circles in Petrograd is well known, determined to destroy him. An incident in the sentimental side of Tatiheff's life gave the Iron Chancellor the opportunity he sought. The Petrograd Cabinet broke Tatiheff, who at once began to avenge himself after the fashion of a strong man. He devoted himself to the study of history, and produced books that gave him a great reputation. During the war of 1877 he served as a volunteer, and behaved in such a way as to win the Cross of St. George. Then he went on with his literary career, until Witte took him back to the service of the state, in the capacity of financial agent. Death overtook him before he had attained the summit of his powers.

Like all intelligent Russians, Tatiheff was a most attractive talker. He had subtlety, im-

agination, wit and charm, and beyond this a sort of courage which enabled him to touch on delicate matters with perfect tact.

Naturally we discussed Russo-Roumanian relations. They were in a very bad way. Being afraid of Russia, we were plunged into a sea of Germanism, and Tatcheff was well informed on this point. He explained to me the plain truth of the matter, which was that the interests of Roumanian national unity were absolutely opposed to a Russophobe policy, and that consequently we were traveling on a wrong road, since any day might find the interests of self-preservation driving us inevitably to reverse our existing programme.

It is easy to imagine Tatcheff's line of argument; there is no need for me to dwell on it. To-day the arguments used by the Russian writer are established in the head and heart of every Roumanian.

Tatcheff came, of course, to the question of Bessarabia. He recognized that the Russian Government had been wrong to insist on our exchanging the three districts of Bessarabia for the Dobrudja. He was of opinion that Russia ought merely to have offered us this

exchange and to have abstained from it if we refused to accept it.

"But," he said, "you would have been very wrong to refuse it. I quite understand Roumanian sentiment about Bessarabia, but this sentiment is not bound up only with the three southern districts, the least Roumanian of all, but with the entire province, the entire territory between the Pruth and the Dniester lost in 1812. I understand this feeling of sad regret and also your keen aspirations in the matter. It is too human and natural for a friend of truth to be able to deny it. But what I do not understand is why the preservation of these three districts, separated from Russian Bessarabia by the most conventional of frontiers, could satisfy the Roumanian instinct towards national unity or augment the chances of the future acquisition of the whole of Bessarabia. Danubian Bessarabia, except for the district of Cahul, is the least Roumanian corner of the Roumanian state, and although the possession of Kilia has played a great part in Roumanian history we should recognize the fact that Moldavian rule has never been more intermittent in any other province of the former state of Moldavia. To envisage the marshes of southern Bessarabia

as a strategic point from which to advance on the Dniester is simply childish. The delta of the Danube is of course very valuable. But a Roumania, mistress of the left bank of the Kilia branch, with Bulgaria on the opposite side of the stream, would have been far less mistress of the Danube delta than she would be in the situation created by her annexation of the Dobrudja. As for access to the sea, one cannot compare the two solutions. The Bessarabian coast even with the proposed bridge at Jibriani would never really have given Roumania proper access to the sea, whereas with Sulina, Constantza and Mangalia it is quite another matter. And it was up to you to add Varna, the best port on the Black Sea—Varna, which in 1878 might have been anything you liked to make it, except a Bulgarian town."

And as I tried to interrupt him, Taticheff added, "I say once more that we were wrong to force your hand and you were still more wrong in refusing an exchange so favorable to yourself. If it had been a question of obtaining possession of the whole of Bessarabia I should have understood your policy, but it was not a question of that or anything approaching it. In 1878 you had a rare

opportunity of making capital out of your alliance with Russia, especially after the glorious days of Plevna. You lost the opportunity, and what did you gain in exchange? Sooner or later the nemesis of history which has placed the greater number of your nationals in Austria-Hungary, that is to say among the Germans, will oblige you to draw near to us, will make you our ally in war, if you do not yourselves intend to seal the destruction of your race and of your independence. And then," said Tatcheff, "in spite of these treaties of yours, treaties you pretend not to know the existence of, but which I know to be real enough, I am counting on you as allies when the great day of reckoning comes. I cannot admit that nations can ever commit suicide. They may delude themselves for a time, but they are obliged to come back to the truth in the end. I hope the great day will find you strong and ready.

Tatcheff was right. In the end truth prevailed.

# *France and the Teuton*

# XXIV

## FRANCE AND THE TEUTON

Everyone in Roumania knew the late Coutouly, formerly French Minister in Bucharest, and everyone appreciated his gentle character and his real friendliness towards our country.

Gustave de Coutouly had served in the *garde mobile* in 1870 and also had assisted in suppressing the Commune. It was quite natural that he should cherish an unfading memory of that dreadful year, and that in his heart there should ever burn the passionate feelings of the vanquished.

The last time I saw him in Paris was at the time of the Tangier difficulty: it will be remembered that the incident which accelerated the first Morocco crisis and almost set Europe ablaze was the famous landing of the Emperor at Tangier. It was like a thunderclap in Paris. People had become accustomed to the idea of peace, and it was believed that France was safe from any new sort of aggression on the part of Germany. This thunderclap out

of a blue sky was in truth the beginning of a new era in the psychology of the people of France.

Some precautions against the possibility of a sudden and absolutely unjustified attack had been taken. The eastern garrisons had been strengthened and frontier regiments were kept always on the alert.

Monsieur de Coutouly's only son was serving in one of these regiments. He was killed in the war, fighting gallantly, two days after his marriage.

I was discussing the gravity of the time with my friend de Coutouly, when he began to read me a letter which his son had sent from the frontier. The young soldier expressed himself in this letter with the magnificent courage, the gayety, the humor, which is characteristic of the Frenchman. He told his father he had nothing to fear, that the new generation, in spite of its apparent softness and indifference, would do its duty as Frenchmen, would prove worthy of their ancestors, and that if war broke out the heroes who were the glory of French history would have reason to be proud of the exploits of the French of to-day. "But," he added, "it is impossible for us to hate. You who were beaten in 1870

cherish a natural and legitimate hatred for Germany, and you must not mind if we do not share it. France has after all fought in turn with so many nations. She has been beaten and she has been victorious. Must we hate the English because of Waterloo, when we have a Crimea in common? Undoubtedly Alsace and Lorraine are very dear to us and we will shed our blood willingly to get them back, but hate the Germans because of Sedan we can't."

Together my friend and I plumbed the depths of the Latin soul, which is just and generous even to the enemy who had injured us.

"The new generation," said my friend, "will astonish you by its heroism and it will be all the more beautiful because hatred has no place in its heart."

And as the soul of the conquered was purged of all evil passions, the victor's hatred of France and the French increased daily, for in Germany they resented the fact that France had not died after 1870. They regretted not having bled her white, not having seized more territory and more money, and they watched for the moment when they could once more

hurl themselves upon her, this time to destroy her forever.

When war broke out, a great friend of mine, Titulesco, was in Stockholm. In order to get home he had to go through Berlin, and he stopped there ten days or more. From Berlin he wrote me a letter, which I have kept, as it does great honor to Titulesco's spirit of observation and the depth of his judgment. He showed himself dumbfounded by what he saw, but the number of guns and the wonderful organization of material was not what interested him, the important factor to him was the German soul. That soul astonished and appalled him at the same time. He witnessed its manifestations. He saw the happy expression with which parents and friends read the names of their dearest in the lists of killed, and he wrote: "It is perfectly clear to me that these people have been waiting for forty years with intense impatience for this day. To this people the war has brought positive happiness; this people desired war with all its strength, they looked upon it as Christians look upon the advent of the Messiah, and in the joy of striking France even natural feelings disappear."

I pondered over the two mentalities, the

sons of the conquered Latins who are unable to hate their conquerors, and the sons of the German conquerors who could not forego their hatred of their former victims.

II

Yesterday evening in my little country library I took down *L'Année Terrible* from the poet's shelf. I had not read it for a long while. The great poet, the greatest lyric poet of modern times, speaks of the choice between the two nations.

He begins with Germany, to whom he devotes three pages, opening with this verse:

"Aucune nation n'est plus grande que toi,"

and which ends:

"L'Allemagne est puissante et superbe,"

and for France he adds only three words:

"O ma mère!"

It was in September, 1870, that Victor Hugo wrote like this, the September in which Germany, having finished her war with the Austrian Empire, began her war against France.

How can Germans ever understand the French soul?

How can they fail to be mistaken as to the power and decision of France?

*A Cousin of Tisza*

## XXV

### A COUSIN OF TISZA

I was talking in Vienna on the evening of the 30th of July, 1914, to a friend—an intimate of Count Berchtold's. This friend happened to be an Englishman who did not believe that England would fight.

"They are keenly anxious for war here," he said, "and to this end they drafted the ultimatum to Serbia in such a way that it could not possibly be accepted. They were greatly disappointed when the report—which, by the way, turned out to be false—got about that the Serbs had accepted it without modification, for they are so well prepared as to be confident of victory. The present Roumanian Government does not count for much here, as it does not appear fully to realize the situation. They tell me if only you were in power a good deal could be done with Roumania. Not only could the whole of Bessarabia lost in 1812 be regained, but Odessa also, and . . . "

I listened to my friend's words: he was quite an intelligent person, and I said to myself, "People in Vienna are up to the neck in ignorance and folly."

II

On the morning of the 3rd of August, 1914, I called a party meeting at my house at Sinaia. It was attended by MM. Dissescu, Istrati, Cantacuzene-Pasheano, Badaran and Cinco.

To them I explained the situation and the matters to be discussed and settled at the Privy Council that afternoon.

I asked each person for his opinion before giving my own. Then I put forward my own views, and added that I was happy to think nearly all were of the same opinion as I was as to the effect on our country of a German victory. It would be the death of Roumania, and it was morally impossible that we should assist at our own funeral.

I said that if they had not been of my opinion I should have retired from the leadership of the Conservative Democratic Party. And even then I should not have lost faith in my country's destiny, but should have worked

on as a private individual in complete freedom and with redoubled energy.

III

I was still at my little villa at Sinaia in September, 1914, just before the fall of Lemberg, when a Hungarian friend, a cousin of Count Tisza, came to see me. He was a charming man, and as a rule did not mix himself up in politics.

He spoke of my own attitude in the great European crisis, an attitude which, he said, might prove fatal to me. He gave me to understand what I already knew well, that Tisza was the real pilot of the Dual Empire, and that after the Peace he intended to become Minister of Foreign Affairs, a post he could keep for life if it pleased him to do so. With the utmost civility he pointed out to me the difficulty, not to say impossibility, of my ever coming back to power in Roumania, as I could never have any decent relations with Count Tisza's Government because of the attitude I was taking. He insinuated that there was still time for me to retreat, and that the Central Powers were confident of victory.

I told him that every man was bound to obey the call of duty without heeding risk or

danger, and that I was quite well aware that in the event of the Germans being victorious it would be my patriotic duty not to embarrass the policy of my country by remaining in public life, and that when countless human lives were being sacrificed on countless battlefields it was ridiculous to stop at the sacrifice of a man's political career, no matter who the man was.

My visitor took the hint, and by way of excusing himself, assured me that his advice had been inspired only by his feelings of friendship. It is, however, the same advice which, since then, has been offered me on several occasions, and by quite different people.

*New Italy*

# XXVI

## NEW ITALY

A FORTNIGHT before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war I was discussing the chances of peace with King Charles, who was not only a statesman but a great soldier. Both of us thought war certain, in spite of the peaceful assurances of the Embassies. I told him of my profound conviction that the Japanese would be victorious all along the line. He answered me with the usual objections, saying that there would be ninety Russian divisions against thirteen Japanese divisions, and so on.

When we had finished arguing he asked me on what I based my conviction. "I believe," I said, "in the moral factor. History teaches that it is this moral factor rather than the mere number of battalions which gives victory. For the Russians this war is an absurd colonial affair, which they do not understand; but for the Japanese victory is a vital necessity. They know quite well that until they

have beaten a white race they will continue to be despised.

"Now for the Japanese honor is the supreme good, and it is necesary for them to win in order to make themselves our equal."

My questioner persisted in his view. "Look here," I said, "you have often told me that the Austrian army was first rate, that its infantry was better than the German infantry, and that the higher command, since they had admitted to it people who were not noble by birth, had made astonishing progress; well, I am perfectly certain that, given equal numbers or thereabouts, the Austrian army could be beaten by any other army in the world. It has not, and never can have, the moral factor." He appeared to find me rather ridiculous, and so I added, "I know that you have a pretty moderate opinion of the Italian army, but I am quite certain that, given equal numbers, the Italian army could beat the Austrian army into a cocked hat."

After a few other remarks I added, "You do not know new Italy; our misfortune is that we preserve the opinions of our first youth and we do not adapt ourselves quickly enough to the new facts around us. Italy, for example, is passing through a moral revolution of which

people in general have no idea. The new generation which has grown up in a free Italy is filled with patriotism, I might say pride, which the extreme politeness of Italians does not make apparent. Italy will no longer stand taking the part of Cinderella among the Great Powers. A working democracy like Italy will never trouble the peace of the world, but if it is forced to go to war it will astonish everyone by the decision of its action and by its heroism."

I realized that I had not convinced King Charles as to the certainty of a Japanese victory, nor as to the superiority of the Italian army over the Austrian army. Perhaps he realized later that I had observed and understood correctly.

Now that the Italians have astonished the world by the valor of their troops, I call to mind this conversation which took place in 1904, and I feel very pleased with myself at having foreseen that which all the world now realizes.

In the month of August, 1901, I climbed Mount Tabor, which is celebrated for the fine panorama one sees from the summit. The ascent is easy, but as it is a question of climbing 10,000 feet it is a lengthy and fatiguing

business. I chatted with my guide, a good chamois hunter, and pointing out to him a steep precipice, which appeared to me quite unclimbable, I asked him if it were possible to get up it. He answered it was very difficult, and he advised me not to try, and then added: "A month ago some Italian Alpini were here. The commandant of the battalion was a little fat man, who was not much to look at. He asked me to help him get up the precipice which you are now pointing out to me. I told him that only chamois could pass that way. He answered, 'Take me all the same; where the chamois can go man can go, and where men can go my battalion can go.' I obeyed him, and the battalion went that way just as the commandant had said."

The Italian Alpini have since won for themselves immortal fame.

*My Four Last Germans*

# XXVII

## MY FOUR LAST GERMANS

Before the world war I knew plenty of Germans; I even counted some of them among my friends. In August, 1914, my relations with Austrians and Germans became cooler and cooler, and some weeks later they almost ceased to exist. Later on, however, circumstances resulted in my meeting at least four Germans, and I am going to record the impressions they made on me.

### I

One is of a conversation with Herr von Busche, the German Minister to Roumania.

Herr von Busche belongs to the new diplomacy. He is a man of education and brains, but absolutely without personality. His darling ambition—and the one he will never realize—is to be taken for a *grand seigneur*. I have only had one conversation with him, and I recognized him at once as base metal. Herr von Busche is like a piece of cheap furniture

—on the surface a thin veneer of oak or walnut, but the substance common deal.

Herr von Busche was sent to Roumania just after the beginning of the war, when Berlin had made the discovery that its Minister at Bucharest, quite an excellent man and one of prodigious wealth, was altogether inadequate. He had hardly arrived at Sinaia when, before being presented either to the Premier or the Foreign Minister, he had a secret interview with King Charles. Thanks to a private police of my own, which has always done me good service, probably because I have never paid for it, I knew of this visit the same day. After his visit to the King, Herr von Busche proceeded to Bucharest to introduce himself officially to the Government. Returning to Sinaia, he sent his Councilor of Legation to ask for an appointment with me, which I fixed for the same day (this, as I say, was at the beginning of the war), and I waited for him in my drawing-room, where there happened to be a portrait of Kiderlen-Waechter with a very cordial inscription. At exactly six o'clock Herr von Busche came in, buttoned tightly up in a frock coat which was plainly intended to suggest London, but as evidently hailed from Berlin—one of those al-

most invisible distinctions which make a world of difference.

Herr Busche, who had been apprised how completely I was convinced of Germany's criminal culpability, affected to know nothing of this, and began by informing me that he could claim a double introduction to me: one was from Prince Bülow, who had begged him to give me his most friendly remembrances; the other was the memory of the late Kiderlen-Waechter, whose pupil he had been in diplomacy. I replied that Prince Bülow had often shown me his friendly feelings, and that to know the terms on which I had been with Kiderlen he had only to look at his photograph —"the photograph," I added, "of a man who would never have allowed himself to be associated with Germany's recent actions."

Having come expressly to plead Germany's innocence, Herr Busche endeavored to convince me that Kiderlen's successors had been as much in favor of peace as himself, and that Germany was fighting a defensive war. I opposed this view energetically, and in the course of our conversation I made Herr von Busche understand that I was well acquainted with what had happened at Berlin, since I knew the circumstances under which Kiderlen-

Waechter had become Foreign Minister, and in particular I referred to the famous memorandum on the world situation which he had presented to Bethmann-Hollweg, after reading which the Chancellor had told the Emperor that he would not consent to stay in office unless Kiderlen had charge of foreign affairs. Herr von Busche showed considerable astonishment at my knowledge of so intimate an incident of German diplomacy, and he took the trouble to let me know that he had made the copy of Kiderlen-Waechter's memorandum with his own hand.

"Well," I said, "you see I know more than you expected of your country's policy;" and I related to him how Kiderlen had failed to obtain the Emperor's consent to the limitation of naval armaments, which would have secured peace, because von Tirpitz had opposed it. I added that Kiderlen had made no secret of his absolute conviction that France would never provoke war. "Any attempt," I added, "on your part to argue that France is morally the author of this catastrophe is, so far as I am concerned, pure waste of energy."

Von Busche accordingly shifted the ground from France and fell back upon England, repeating like a gramophone all the German

absurdities about England's bellicose intentions and intrigues. I cut short this piece of maladroit special pleading by a simple statement which completely upset my visitor. "You are giving yourself perfectly useless trouble," I told him. "I know England too well for that. It is Hungary and Germany who have started universal war." And I argued this so vigorously that von Busche persisted no further and changed the subject. But before doing so he was at pains to repeat once again that Germany was waging a defensive war, and that the German people were convinced of it.

"There you are right," I replied. "What astonishes me most in your country is neither its military power, formidable as it is, nor its remarkable organization, but your success in having so disciplined your people that you can control their convictions, as if by police regulation, however contrary they are to the facts. This is indeed a unique and unprecedented achievement."

From this stage the conversation began to languish. The German Minister was obviously looking for an opportunity to escape, but the Councilor of Legation, for whom he was waiting, had not yet arrived. When at length he came in Herr von Busche—again the base

metal revealing itself—felt it necessary to excuse himself for leaving so soon. "But," he said, "I have an audience with the King at a quarter past seven."

"I congratulate you," I said, "on seeing His Majesty twice in three days. It is a good augury for your mission." Von Busche turned pale and said that he did not understand me, as in a few minutes he was going to see the King for the first time. He added that it would have been impossible for him to see the King before he had been officially presented to his Ministers.

"Oh," said I, "in that case it is, of course, my mistake." And these were the last words exchanged between Germany's last Minister to Roumania and myself.

This attempt, doomed in advance to failure, to prove that the author of the world war was England, and the lie with regard to his having met the King, may be fairly regarded as an epitome of the whole German diplomatic method.

II

A few days after the battle of the Marne I was on my way from my villa at Sinaia to the Palace Hotel when a motor car stopped in

front of me. A man smothered in dust got out of it to speak to me. As he said he had come from Berlin on behalf of Herr Zimmermann solely in order to speak to me, I arranged to see him at once. In my house a few minutes later he withdrew this, and explained that Zimmermann had not really sent him.

My visitor from Berlin was, in fact, a German engineer who had lived many years in Roumania, married a Roumanian lady, been appointed a teacher in one of our higher-grade schools, and, in fact, had become so completely one of ourselves that I firmly believed he had been naturalized as a Roumanian. At the outbreak of war Mr. S. happened to be in Berlin, and before Roumania had definitely declined to enter the war at the side of Germany, he had made it his business to assist in bringing this about. With this object he used to send us from Berlin immense telegrams, sometimes two or three a day, containing remarkably biassed information on the progress of the war, evidently designed to work upon our fears. This reckless outlay made it clear to me that Mr. S. was doing his work at Germany's expense, which on the part of a naturalized Roumanian made me very angry. Immediately on meeting him I had reproached

him vehemently for thus allowing himself to forget that he had become a Roumanian citizen, and my indignation fairly carried me away. Its object excused himself to me on the ground that he had not, in fact, ever been naturalized, but the violence with which I had spoken to him had made its impression, and when he came to my house all his earlier audacity had disappeared.

Mr. S.'s proposal was really paralyzing. He began by admitting that my attitude towards Germany was quite naturally explained by my affection for France; "but," he added, "we Germans are also very fond of France and have no complaint to make of her. On the contrary, the idea of being at war with France is exceedingly painful to us. Such being Germany's feelings for France, I have come to you, since I have long considered you as one of the clearest-sighted men in Europe —an opinion which is also shared by the political world of Berlin—to give you the opportunity of rendering to Roumania, France, and humanity alike a service which will ensure your name being forever enshrined in history.

"Go to Paris, where everyone—very rightly —trusts you. Propose to France a separate

peace. We will offer her terms of peace, magnificent terms, beyond her utmost hopes: and, after that, we will punish, as they deserve, the Russians, and above all the English, the real criminals who have provoked the war and are responsible for this catastrophe. You have more chance than anyone else in the world of being listened to."

I answered my German as any other man in my place must have answered: I told him that he had no shred of reason to believe it possible that I could listen to such a suggestion. What he was proposing to me was an infamy of which he should have known I was incapable. If France ever wished to be guilty of such abominable treachery she would not require any intervention on my part, and to suppose anything else was not only to lose all sense of proportion but to be quite abnormally stupid. I then dismissed S. as he deserved, but not without first telling him how little I thought of Germany for her ignorance of the spirit of France and of her other adversaries.

That Berlin should have thought me so foolish as to suppose myself able to play such a part, and base enough to wish to play it, is nothing: it is merely an erroneous estimate

of an individual. But that Berlin could imagine that France would betray England, who had come to her help without any obligation, made it perfectly clear to me that people at Berlin had completely lost, not only all sense of right, but what is sometimes more dangerous, all intelligence as well.

I have not seen Mr. S. again.

### III

In November, 1914, at Bucharest, I received the last visit of a German friend with whom my relations had been very close.

Mr. X. is a man of business; he is also a man of brains, one of those singularly clear intellects which impress one from the first and in the presence of which one feels that here is a man who would have been a success at any period, in any country and in any career. Mr. X. is also one of the most international of Germans; his mother was a Russian, his wife is English, he has one sister married in Russia and another in the United States. He has passed a great part of his life in Russia, in England and in Roumania. With all this he is highly educated, astute and witty. I say all this, because in November, 1914, X. gave me an unexpected opportunity of seeing

how the German war could pervert even so cultivated an intelligence as his. When I record what X. said to me my astonishment will be intelligible. It will be understood also why, when after three hours' conversation he left me, I said to some friends who were waiting for me to dine with them, "I have just been spending three hours in a lunatic asylum."

X. had always entertained for me a genuine friendship, and had come in reality to see whether he could do nothing to make me less Germanophobe. Too well brought up to reveal his plans openly, he began by offering me Herr von Busche's excuses for no longer visiting me. "If it was only Germany you attacked," he said, "it would always be a pleasure to Herr Busche to call upon you, but you attacked the Kaiser, and that he cannot ignore."

I replied that Herr von Busche was perfectly right not to call on me, because in no case should I return his visit. I added that if ever Herr von Busche met me I begged that he would not bow to me, since I had quite made up my mind not to return it.

In terms most nicely calculated not to offend me, X. then said how profoundly he re-

gretted, not only on my account but on that of Roumania, to see me afloat in a vessel which was bound to founder; and very delicately he alluded to certain strokes of the oar which, taken at the right moment, might effect a complete change of course. As I did not wish to bandy words with him, I pretended not to understand, and replied that I had not, indeed, any boat beneath me, but that I was a lone swimmer in an ocean full of danger, obeying simply the imperative behests of my conscience, and without ever asking myself whether or not I had any prospect of reaching land. And as X. insisted on Roumania's misfortune in losing the only politician who, according to him, was of real worth, I cut him short with the words, which I have so often repeated, "How can one concern oneself with the situation of an individual when the fate of the world is at stake?" Accordingly X., abandoning all hope of convincing me, left the personal question and began a monologue, like a man thinking aloud. For more than two hours he explained to me why Germany must be victorious, why it was impossible that she should be otherwise, and why all those who placed themselves across the German path would be crushed to the earth with-

out any advantage to themselves or to the cause which they wished to serve. According to him, Germany was at least half a century in advance of the rest of the world, because she understood what organization meant, while all other countries were still relying on the futilities of individual initiative. "For that reason more than any other," he said, "Germany's victory, which is just as much beyond dispute as the sun in the sky, will be an advantage to the whole human race, since even the nations she conquers will feel the benefit of her supremacy.

"Of all our enemies France is the only one with whom we need reckon. Her soldiers, her officers, her General Staff, are just as good as ours, but thirty-eight millions of men can do nothing against seventy millions. France will be ground to powder, and we Germans will be sorry for it.

"Russia gives us no anxiety. Numbers are not the main factor in war. Russia, believe me, will go from collapse to collapse. Each time you fancy that Russia is on the point of an achievement you will have a repetition of the Mazurian lakes. Thanks to Russia's disorder, Russia's indifference, her absolute lack of organization and her fundamental in-

ability to create it, the famous steam-roller is a perilous illusion. Believe me, the Russians will be beaten at just that moment when their allies will have special need of them, and they will be first to quit the field.

"There remains England. Obviously she might have been formidable. If England had begun to arm herself ten years ago we should never have dared to venture on war. But England wishes to do in a few months what has taken Russia a hundred years. That is asking too much of human capacity, and it will never come to pass. You will see what will be the course of events. The war will last a few months more, at the very most a year. Then the Kaiser, at the head of his troops, will enter Paris, Moscow and London." I smiled at this, and X. replied: "Yes, London. It is there, at Westminster, that the Emperor will dictate the world's peace and the reorganization of the human race."

Nothing was further from X.'s mind than bluff. He was profoundly convinced of his own prophecy, which, indeed, in his view, amounted to evidence. Yet I repeat that X. is a man of education and brains, who has traveled, who is at home all the world over,

and having lived all his life among foreigners might well have a more open mind.

He gave me the solution himself when he said that since the war no one could feel himself more of the German Michael[1] than he did.

In the Spring of 1915 a friend came to tell me that a German diplomatist with whom I had been very friendly, but to whom I had not bowed for some months, was begging to meet me at any cost. It was suggested to me that we should come across each other, as if by chance, at my friend's house. After much persuasian I agreed, on the express condition that no word of politics should be mentioned. I knew perfectly well that the German diplomatist would not respect this undertaking, but the agreement to exclude politics was indispensable if I were to be able, without rudeness, to bring our conversation to an end at the moment of my choice.

Next afternoon, at half-past five, I was duly calling on my friend when the German diplomatist came in. He told me that he realized that Roumania would soon be at war with Germany, that consequently he would have to leave Bucharest, and that he had come to beg me, when the occasion arose, to take charge

[1] Michael: the German equivalent of "John Bull."

of the keys of his flat, feeling sure that he could count upon me to see that his property was respected. It is quite needless to say that he had no intention of doing anything of the kind, and that when Roumania declared war on Germany in August, 1916, he never even thought of it. It is, however, a pleasure to me to recall that a German diplomat reckoned on me for the preservation of his house and furniture, when I remember that in December, 1916, when the German armies occupied Bucharest, Field Marshal von Mackensen not only gave orders for my house to be sacked, with the most complete and what I may be forgiven for calling the most Hunnish particularity, but came in person a few days afterwards, accompanied by his staff, to admire the way in which his instructions had been carried out. There are things that the Germans do differently from other people.

My German diplomatist asked me with irresistible frankness on what my conviction that Germany would be defeated was based. I answered him without any reserve. I explained to him my reasons, which were those of ordinary common sense, and we passed, step by step, from one point to another, until at length he reached that of making the follow-

ing remarkable admission: "All you say is perfectly true. The militarism of Prussia, the martinet spirit of Prussia, is the most abominable thing on the face of the earth. But it happens to be invincible. And there is nothing for us—for any of us—to do but bow before it as to fate."

My only reply was to tell my German diplomatist, who happened to be a Saxon by birth, that I would see him again at the end of the war.

*Eleutherios Venizelos*

# XXVIII

## ELEUTHERIOS VENIZELOS

### I

All greatness is rare, and human greatness is the rarest of all. By human greatness I mean a harmonious personality made up of high intelligence, moral beauty and inflexibility of will. Great minds are not so scarce as men think, moral beauty is fortunately fairly common, especially amongst humble folk. Tenacity of will is often combined with moral perversity. But the combination of these qualities in a whole which, according to my own idea, alone constitutes true human greatness, is so rare that one may go through life without meeting it.

Venizelos [1] is a true example of human greatness, and of a greatness such that one may unreservedly admire it. It should not be forgotten that in sincere profound admiration we may find one of those rare springs of joy

[1] This appreciation was written in 1915, before M. Venizelos' recall to power.

which from time to time create an illusion as to the value of life.

Shakespeare, the greatest poet humanity has ever produced, presents this remarkable and almost unique characteristic—that we know nothing of his life. Venizelos is rather like him. Until recent years his life was so devoid of incident that it leaves a vast field to be occupied by legend. The only thing known about his early career is the time he spent in the mountains with other Cretans fighting for his country's independence. This was a moral education. People do not know, however, that this Cretan carried books about with him in the bush, in order to perfect himself in the study of French.

II

Before the time of Venizelos, Greece had fallen low, as we know only too well. If she had not since then risen again so marvelously, I, who owe an eternal debt to the Hellenic people, should not dare to speak of their past. During the war of independence Greece had accomplished marvels of heroism and moral beauty which in the end drew to it the protection of the three Great Powers, France, England and Russia—the three Powers that

are always associated in history with noble action, whether they act independently or together. But this same Greece had started down a real incline almost immediately after her emancipation. She made an unhappy choice in her first king. How could any rigid Bavarian understand the Greek soul? Her second king made a rule of leaving the Greeks entirely free, he did not so much as guide them through difficult moments, and there resulted a period of unchecked quarreling between political parties, the system of dividing the spoil pushed to its utmost limits, and in spite of the efforts of another great man, Tricoupis, the Greek people, one of the most gifted on the earth, knew all the misery of defeat and bankruptcy.

As ever, the nation was saved on the edge of the abyss by the only means of salvation that history knows—revolution, and by the most dangerous form of revolution, that known as the military *coup d'état*. King George, who had done nothing to deserve it, drank the full cup of humiliation to the dregs. With his own hand he signed the order cashiering his own sons from the army, including the Crown Prince, whose name was for the Greeks forever associated with their defeat

at Domokos in 1897. Whatever his faults may have been, a martyrdom like his should have expiated them. After having destroyed, it was necessary to rebuild. But military revolution, unless it throws up a Napoleon, though very effective in clearing the ground, finds reconstruction beyond its powers.

Greece was in a state of veritable chaos. The new Chamber not only wanted to set about revising the fundamental laws of the state, but it also wanted to proclaim its own supremacy, though the exercise of such supremacy was something quite beyond its powers as they had then developed.

It was at this moment that the Cretan arrived.

He came alone; without clansmen, or family, or fortune; without past or party or supporters. He stood, as I say, alone.

He was received like a god—crowds are occasionally endowed with divine intuition of this kind. Received as a god, he acted from the first moment as a man.

There are few finer pages in history than the account of how the Cretan faced the people of Athens. They were shouting with all their might, "Long live Venizelos! Long live the Constitutional Assembly!" and he forced

upon them the alternative cry, "Long live the revision of the Constitution!"

This man was right when the world was wrong. Like all creators, he began by smashing everything. He crushed the parties, or rather the old cliques which had brought Greece to destruction. He made another nation. Amongst an excitable people he dared to insist on the permanent status of the civil servant, his selection by competitive examination, and his promotion on the recommendation of his colleagues.

He cleaned the stable out better even than the Hercules of legend. An astonished Europe could indulge itself in the spectacle of a great man come to light.

II

After having remade Greece himself, he turned to the fate of Hellenism in the world at large.

During the whole Balkan crisis—and one can say this quite truthfully—it was Greece that, thanks to the genius of Venizelos, with the smallest army of all at her disposal, controlled events.

With the insight of a great man, Venizelos realized the true value of Serbia; he attached

Serbia to Greece, and at all times and in all circumstances dominated M. Pasitch by the power of his personal attraction. When it was found impossible to arrive at an understanding with Turkey on the subject of Crete, owing to the hopeless incapacity of the Turks, Venizelos accomplished the miracle of concluding an alliance with the Bulgarians, a race that the Greek people traditionally regarded in the light of an hereditary and uncompromising enemy. In concluding this alliance he saw clearly how necessary it was to keep out of the treaty all reference to the division of territories that might be conquered in the future. King George and the Crown Prince (afterwards King Constantine) opposed Venizelos bitterly, but the Cretan once more gained his point, and the treaty was silent as to the division of the spoils. Because of his prevision, Greece escaped the imputations and difficulties in which Serbia is still involved.

In London Venizelos imposed his personality on all political and diplomatic circles, and this in spite of his reserve and modesty, which was such a contrast to the foolish arrogance of Danef.

It was just at that time that I had the hap-

piness of getting to know him, and of forming one of those friendships, based on confidence and sympathy, which death alone can break.

I only saw Venizelos twice at that time, but it sufficed for me to know that I had before me not only a great man but a gentleman, a man in whom one might repose unlimited confidence without running the risk of being deceived. I knew he was in profound disagreement with the Bulgarians at the Balkan Conference which was then sitting, but he had too much delicacy to say a word to me about difficulties between him and his allies.

The first time I saw him I asked him the secret of his extraordinary success. He replied that he had arrived at the right moment, and that he had adopted two rules of conduct: to tell his people the whole truth in all circumstances, and to be ready to leave office at any moment without regret.

I had a very animated conversation with him at Bucharest. He became very angry when I told him it was a mistake to insist upon getting Kavalla.

From his anger I could see—what later on I found to be true—that he was not the only director of his country's policy. At the time I was dreaming of completing the Treaty of

Bucharest by a treaty of alliance between the four kingdoms of Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria, and Roumania.

When all the secrets of the Balkan crisis are revealed, when men know all that Venizelos did, our admiration for him as a great man will be enhanced. Here, at least, we have an individual who need not fear that all his actions and even his secret thoughts should be revealed.

After the Treaty of Bucharest, Venizelos found he had to fight Austrian intrigues at Constantinople. I do not want to tell the history of the Treaty of Athens now, nor to insist on the fact that on several occasions a new war between Turkey and Greece was on the point of breaking out and that Venizelos was prepared for all eventualities. All I want to do at the moment is to render public homage to the moral beauty of Venizelos, who, far from wishing to ignore the services I was able at that time to do Greece and the cause of peace, insisted on giving them the widest publicity.

At the end of October, 1913, he wrote me a letter of generous appreciation, in which he said: "Our recent friendship has been rich in practical results for my country, and I rejoice

that Roumania has again so well played the part of arbiter in the conclusion of peace in the Balkans. It is a new bond between our two nations; we who are already bound by the same interests are destined to advance together on the path of civilization." Magnanimity is always the mark of greatness.

Venizelos had the question of Epirus on his hands at the time. He knew quite well that it was impossible for Greece to oppose the unanimous wish of the Great Powers, and that it would be unworthy of him to be the cause of a general war. He sacrificed himself to his duty, knowing well that the day would come when he would be able to obtain Epirus without provoking Europe. But in making good this policy he spent himself, just as he spent himself at Bucharest when he failed in obtaining for the Greeks the sun, the moon and the constellations. His actions were closely watched at Athens. Every concession this great man made for the peace of Europe and the security of his country was made the occasion of attacking him as a coward soul who, having no faith in the force of Hellenism, did not dare show himself implacable.

Nothing is easier than to obtain vulgar popularity by siding with those who shout loudest

at a time when, at the risk of unpopularity, another man takes upon himself to defend his country.

It is to this incident that Venizelos owes the enmity of M. Zographos, just as later on, as a reward for his efforts over the Islands, he had to submit to all the epithets coined by the envious and the disappointed.

III

Everyone who has studied history sufficiently to know that great men are sometimes rather a burden on their country, will understand that Venizelos could not remain long in power.

After the Treaty of Bucharest had been signed M. Pasitch invited us all to luncheon at the Palace Hotel. Speaking to my right-hand neighbor, I told him of a wish I had cherished for many years of visiting Japan in the summer of 1914. Venizelos heard me, and asked me if I would take him as a traveling companion. Then he went on to ask with a smile whether I was sure I should be free in the first half of the year 1914. He was alluding to the opinion generally held that the men who had accomplished the work of 1913 would be retained in office by their peoples.

I told him, and the other guests were greatly surprised at it, that I was sure of this freedom, not only for myself, but also for him. As far as Venizelos was concerned, I was wrong by a year. But for the Island question and the surprise of the European war, he would have been out of office at the period I predicted. His greatness offended people in a way one could hardly imagine. The man who created modern Greece had at all costs to disappear from the scene in order that certain personages might emerge from their obscurity. I felt it first in July, 1913, and I became firmly convinced of it in the months that followed.

When European war broke out I had no doubts as to Venizelos' thoughts. I knew that he wanted a serious and lasting alliance amongst the little nations, and I could not believe that such a genius would not realize that the independence, the liberty, the very existence of Greece was indissolubly bound up, as indeed were the independence and liberty of Roumania, with the defeat of Austria and Germany. I have learned since that he thought as I did, and as a consequence that he realized from the beginning that our highest moral duty, not only to civilization, but also in re-

spect of our interests as nations, was to do all in our power to bring about the victory of the Triple Entente.

With the fixed idea in my head of bringing over all the Balkan nations to the side of the Triple Entente, and in spite of Austro-German affirmations concerning their hold on Bulgaria, I allowed myself to telegraph and write to Venizelos, begging him to help us to show, in this European crisis, that we were broad-minded Europeans. I said it would be the worse for us if we showed ourselves petty and provincial. A victorious Germany would spell moral and material death. A Triple Entente victorious without our help would spell our moral undoing.

I told him that just as I was advising my country to make territorial concessions to the Bulgarians, and advising the Serbs to do the same thing on a substantial scale, as the war would give them a magnificent territory extending up to the frontiers of Italy, so Greece, in a lesser degree, should also set an example, more especially as splendid compensation awaited her in Asia Minor. It was in August and September, 1914, that I ventured to write in this strain to my friend at Athens. I will come back to it later. For the sake of

truth I ought to say that Venizelos replied to me in the autumn that Greece could not make any territorial concessions, and I felt rather bitter about it. Bitter because, although I did not think that I could influence the decisions of a Venizelos, I saw that Venizelos was even more than I had guessed the victim of difficulties originating in people without foresight, and who, therefore, cannot understand those who have this divine gift. The revelations Venizelos has recently made have completely cleared this matter up.

Never did he appear to me greater than after I had read the two memoranda he addressed to King Constantine.

I am one of those who have read and reread Bismarck's Memoirs. There is nothing in them which approaches the greatness of soul revealed in the two documents penned by Venizelos. How could a man like myself fail to resent the ironic fate of these two papers, addressed as they were to people incapable of using them.

The publication of the documents not only exalts Venizelos higher than ever, but is an inestimable service to Greece.

To prove to the Bulgarians that a Greek existed, the greatest Greek of all, who con-

ceived the possibility of sacrifice in order to secure peace with his neighbors, that is a finer work than striking medals with the effigy of King Constantine on them, entitled the "Slayer of Bulgars."

IV

And now we come to Venizelos' last act. At fifty he retired from political life, announcing that if ever his country found herself faced with a great foreign crisis he would return to the fray, as would be his right and his duty. And after having affirmed with all his strength his right as a free man to fight no matter whom, he retires as a free man, announcing to his people that it is the last service he can render the Crown.

This resignation of Venizelos, however distracting for all the friends of Greece, presents one with the spectacle of almost superhuman greatness. This man would only have to march straight ahead and everything would go down before him. But afraid of wounding Greece, he performed an act of sacrifice that was harder than dying itself, and exiled himself from the company of the living.

Compare the fall of Venizelos with that of Bismarck, and the superiority of our Græco-

Latin race over the Germans will stand out in all its sublimity. Dismissed by a young Emperor, Bismarck knows neither how to fight as a man or be silent as a man. He scolds like a discharged cook. Why this difference? Was Bismarck of inferior metal to Venizelos? It was not this, but that Bismarck belonged to a nation which for centuries has held the notion that the statesman is not the servant of his country but the servant of his king, and that the king himself is not the highest expression of the national will, but another will superimposed on that of the nation.

Bismarck was heavily weighted by medieval institutions and a life of obedience, and, when dismissed like a servant, like a servant he cried aloud. The Greek, true son of the French revolution, knows that he is the servant of the people, and when he surrenders everything it is to the people that he makes his sacrifice. He withdraws as a free man without recrimination.

## V

And now for a final recollection!

The last time Venizelos came to Roumania I had a talk with him in the embrasure of one of the windows of the Palace. We spoke of

that political philosophy to which men concerned with the business of Government always hark back. Amongst other things, we spoke of the relations between the statesman and his Sovereign in countries where monarchy is still an institution. And the Cretan said to me: "It is our duty to devote our heart, our brain, our life to strengthening and supporting our sovereigns. We know well enough that, in their turn, they will only dismiss us if they cannot destroy us. All the same, we must do our duty, because it is our duty."

Venizelos has done his.

The Kaiser

# XXIX

## THE KAISER

I HAVE only seen the Kaiser once. To speak of him after this single interview would be rash, if the Kaiser were not one of those figures which are always posed for the camera and whose characteristics can be almost instantaneously caught. Pope Leo XIII had also only seen him once, at the outset of his reign, when he said of him, "This man will end in a catastrophe."

It was in January, 1907, at Berlin, that I was received in audience by the Kaiser. There was luncheon afterwards, to which, apart from the Court, no one else was asked except Herr Tchirsky, then Foreign Minister, and the Roumanian Minister to Germany, on whose unfortunate behaviour during our war it is beyond me to express an opinion. I was waiting and chatting with the Empress in a little room opening into the dining-room, when the Kaiser came in. I was at once struck by his machine-made stride, and when he planted himself less

than two paces in front of me, his steely eyes looking straight into mine, the impression of something mechanical became still stronger. The Kaiser's stare is like nothing I have ever seen before, quite abnormal in its intensity, and distinctly suggestive of madness. For perhaps ten minutes he talked to me in the anteroom. Question followed question breathlessly, giving me scarcely time to frame an answer to one before it was followed by another.

It was clear that the Emperor meant to make himself pleasant. The evening before he had taken the trouble to inquire whether I would rather be talked to in French or English. I had said I would prefer French. Needless to say, I was surprised at so obvious an intention of ingratiating himself: a Roumanian Minister of Finance was hardly so important that the Emperor of all-powerful Germany should be at such pains to please him. I naturally concluded that the Kaiser was a master of the art of seduction, and later on my impression of this resemblance to Nero was confirmed.

The Kaiser started by telling me that he knew me very well already from the reports of Kiderlen-Waechter, his Minister in Rou-

mania, who had told him all about me. "I don't know," he said, "if your brothers are fond of you, but my Minister's appreciation and affection for you were more than brotherly." He went on to talk to me of the difficulties of a Minister of Finance in our time; then leading the conversation—if an avalanche of interjections can be called a conversation—to the question of petroleum in Roumania, he said to me in a cutting tone that he did not propose to have any interference from America in European affairs, and that he looked upon the full exploitation of our petroleum as one of the bulwarks against her encroachments.

Of this preliminary conversation this was the one point clearly impressed on me. It was plain that the Kaiser, as the world has since had ample reason to know, detested America.

During lunch—I was seated on the Emperor's left, his daughter being on his right hand—and afterwards for more than an hour in the smoking-room, William II talked to me without ceasing, skipping from one subject to another with an inconsequence and a feverish impatience which I had never previously encountered. He was bent on show-

ing me that he was little short of omniscient; he even talked to me of the Roumanian monument in the Dobrudja — the so-called Tropeum by Adam Ceissi — and he was evidently pleased and surprised when I told him that Moltke had spoken of it in his book on his early travels.

Among a thousand other things, the Kaiser asked me how King Charles had always managed to get his own way, in spite of our parliamentary system. I told him in reply that the King had always had the wisdom to let matters take their course, except in special questions which he thought of particular importance, and that in these his influence was consequently decisive. The Emperor then asked me why his brother-in-law, King George of Greece, was not similarly successful, and I gave him my explanation. During this part of the conversation I realized again how profound was the Kaiser's contempt for liberal ideas and the constitutional system. It was plain that he was sincere when he declared that Providence had chosen him as its instrument to insure the happiness of this poor world, just as Nero was sincere when he believed himself a great artist.

After that we were talking of sport, espe-

cially in Roumania, when the Kaiser brusquely asked me if King Charles was popular. I said that popularity was hardly the word, but that the King enjoyed something better, since he was much esteemed. "That does not surprise me," said the Kaiser; "it is thanks to his reserved temperament." Unfortunately it was in reserve that the Kaiser was deficient. . . .

Here I had had this man, master of the most formidable organization in the world, talking to me for three hours with the obvious desire of pleasing me and of overwhelming me with his omniscience and his genius, and yet when I left the Palace I felt like an escaped prisoner. Next day Prince Bülow asked me how I had been impressed. I told him that the Kaiser was an extraordinary man, but that I would not be his Minister for anything in the world. Prince Bülow smiled a rather bitter smile, which showed quite clearly that he knew exactly what I meant.

The Kaiser, I repeat, had been more than kind. He even had the delicacy not to give me my cordon of the Red Eagle a decoration which I was destined to return to him in the Spring of 1916 on the occasion of our lunch, but to send it to me three days later

by Monsieur Tchirsky, as "a souvenir of my visit to Berlin."

I have never seen the Kaiser since, but some years later, in conversation at Potsdam with a Roumanian lady, a musician, married to a German, the Emperor asked her if she was German by birth, and when she answered that she was a Roumanian the Kaiser said in reply: "Well, and how is our good Take Jonesen?" and my musical friend, who was temperamentally a courtier, told me of this Imperial apostrophe as if it were almost a divine honor.

Of my single interview with the German autocrat I retain a disquieting recollection. It was plain to me that he was a man out of the ordinary run, and yet there was something abnormal, almost unhealthy, about him which kept me perpetually asking myself what he would ultimately do. The contemplation of real greatness provokes a serene sense of admiration. That was not the impression left on me by the Kaiser. On the other hand, he did not strike me as a man of commonplace qualities, whom the accident of birth had placed in a situation out of all proportion to his natural capacity. Rather, there was something exceptional about him, but it was something incalculable and alarming.

From Kiderlen-Waechter I knew already the Kaiser's methods of work, which were at once comic and full of danger. Every morning he went to the Foreign Ministry, where he had all the telegrams read to him and demanded immediate replies. Then he drank a glass of port, ate two biscuits and departed. To prevent his monarch's impulsiveness resulting in complications, Kiderlen had recourse to a plan of his own. He only showed the Kaiser such telegrams as had been received up to one o'clock in the morning, those, that is, which he had himself had time to consider, so that he was in a position, if necessary, to withstand the Emperor's impetuosity.

The great question which remains, and will always remain, to be answered is how the Kaiser, whom a German once described to me as a lath painted to look like steel, brought himself to the point of launching universal war, and when he actually chose the date of August, 1914. The oftener I recall the impressions left on me by my interview with him, the more firmly I believe that the war had long been part of his deliberate policy, but that the choice of the moment and the form of its declaration were due to impulse. It would otherwise be incomprehensible that

the Kaiser, who certainly did not lack brains (like his son, whom Kiderlen-Waechter frankly treated as deficient), should have risked all the hopes of his country and his house at that particular moment, and for the sake of a question which exclusively concerned Austria-Hungary. For in the future of Austria-Hungary William II had no confidence. So long ago as the autumn of 1912 Herr von Jagow, a favorite of the Kaiser, and then German Ambassador at Rome, said to the Roumanian Minister that the great question of the hour was to discover how the inevitable dissolution of Austria-Hungary could take place without the destruction of the European fabric. Again, in the early days of November, 1913, on my way back from Athens, where I had succeeded in making peace between Turkey and Greece, I was dining with the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople. During the evening the German Ambassador, von Wangenheim, now dead, who was also a favorite of the Kaiser, and whom I then met for the first time, carried me off into the bay of a window, and after first congratulating me on what I had done at Athens, said to me, in so many words, "You will see that the sick man of Europe, the Turk, will still be here

when Austria-Hungary is no more than a historical recollection." So the Kaiser could have been under no illusion as to the possibility of giving the Hapsburg Empire a new lease of life.

How then can we explain his policy? Perhaps the key can be found in a confidential statement he made at Potsdam in the early days of August, 1914, to the Crown Prince of Roumania. The Emperor told him that it was in the interest of Roumania to place herself at the side of Germany, whose victory was beyond question, because Austria-Hungary could not last for more than twenty years, and Germany would then give Transylvania to Roumania. The Kaiser's crime against the peace of the world is therefore all the more unpardonable, because in his inmost heart he could not believe that it would bring the era of great European upheavals to a close. He drew the sword, not to preserve Austria, but in order to dispose of her ultimately in his own fashion and at his own time.

It must not be supposed, because I have only spoken to the Kaiser once, that this conversation is my only material for the estimate I have framed of him. An essential timorousness is the explanation of his character, and

like all men who are not really courageous, when the Kaiser decided to make daring the keynote of his policy, he overdid it. An incident of the early years of his reign with which I am acquainted reveals him precisely. Bismarck had no love for him, and lost no occasion to make the Kaiser understand that he was a figurehead, and that the real authority rested with his Chancellor. He went so far in this that one day, when the Emperor asked him to promote a diplomatist of minor rank for whom he had a liking, Bismarck curtly refused. In spite of this the Emperor stuck to his point and returned to it several times. Bismarck remained immovable. Faced with this situation, the Emperor had neither the strength of mind to abandon his demand nor to give his instructions as an order. The tension became so great that someone in the Kaiser's immediate circle went to Holstein and asked him to use his well-known influence with Bismarck to bring an impossible situation to an end. Bismarck would not hear a word of it. Holstein at length decided to make a fresh attempt the day before the Kaiser was starting on a cruise in the North Sea. Just as he was embarking he was told that there were indications of Bismarck giv-

ing way. During the whole voyage the Emperor was restless, nervous, and irritable, and yet never dared to say a word against his Chancellor. At the first point at which he touched in Norway he learned the news that Bismarck had at last yielded. His delight was overwhelming. He was as extravagantly pleased as a child. Kiderlen-Waechter, who accompanied him, and had told Holstein how necessary it was that this small satisfaction should be given to the Emperor, was more than astonished at the spectacle of the master of all Germany literally jumping with joy at having been able to promote a civil servant. This is the same man who, when the day came on which he decided to destroy the builder of modern Germany, acted with reckless audacity and an absolute want of proportion or delicacy—once again the weak man overdoing it. It was probably in the same fashion that he brought about the world war. For years he had wished for it, but he shrank from making the election. As soon as he had made a step forward he recoiled from the decisive measure—the essentially timorous man again, willing to wound but yet afraid to strike.

But on the day when he had screwed his courage to the sticking point his impetuosity

became nearly insane, for it was insanity on the part of the Kaiser to declare war himself in place of provoking his adversaries and forcing them to declare it on him.

The complex personality of the Emperor William and the dreadful penalty which humanity has paid because the last Hohenzollern, instead of being the traditional Prussian sovereign, not too intellectual but full of common-sense, was half a madman and half a genius, must confirm us all in the profound conviction that the well-being of a country and of the world is a charge too serious to depend on the accidents of absolutism.

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